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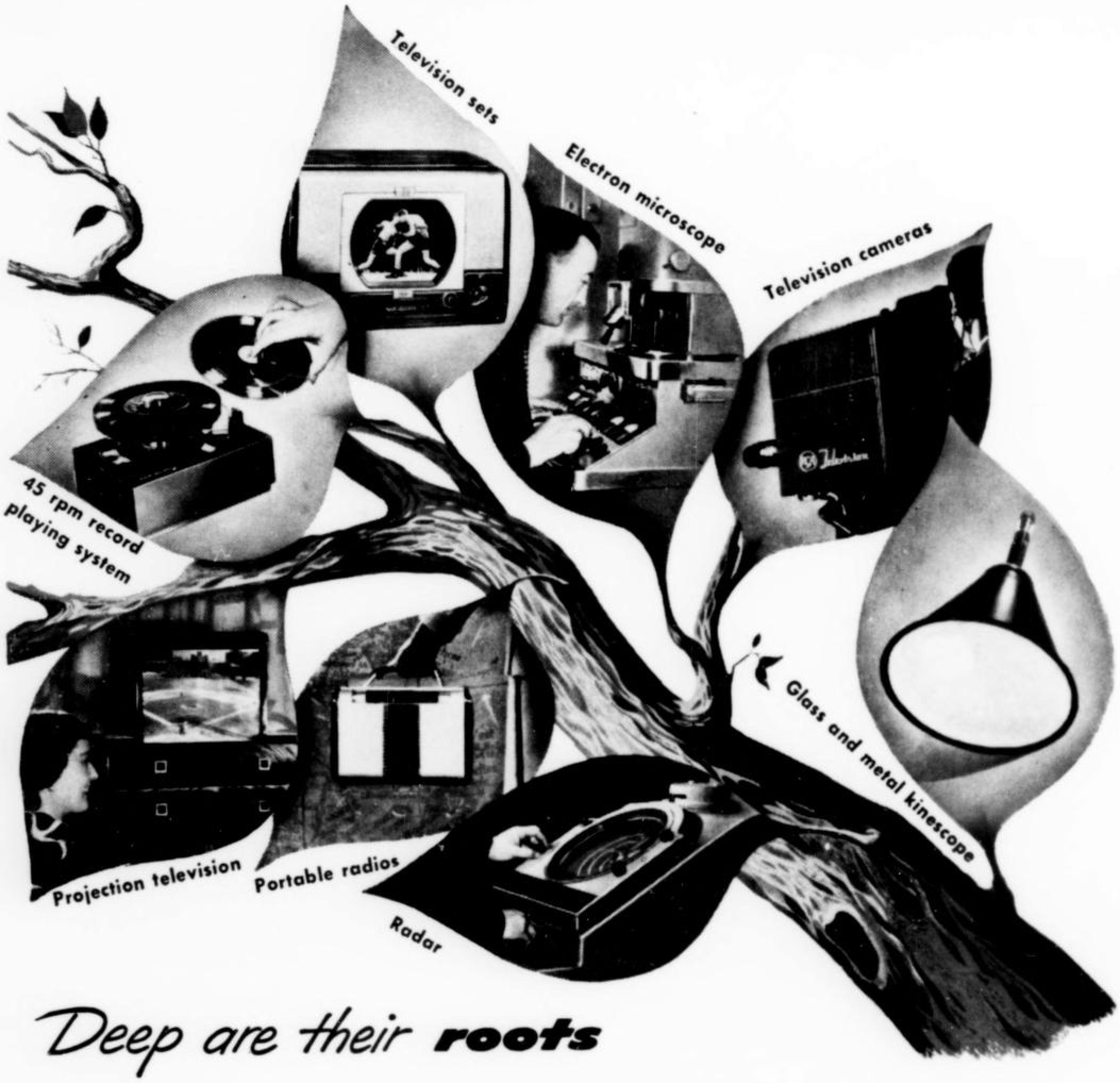
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COMMENTARY

AMERICAN JEWS THROUGH ISRAELI EYES

A Traveler's Report on Some Current Attitudes

ARTHUR HERTZBERG

"WHY don't you stay in Israel? Why didn't more Americans come to fight? Why don't you send us more money? What are you American Jews like anyway?"

Almost as soon as the plane landed at Lydda airport I was in the midst of this argument, and the discussion continued until I walked past the customs barrier on the night of my departure.

Mine was not an isolated experience. Every fellow tourist from America had comparable tales to relate. Perhaps we brought much of the discussion upon ourselves. We were all rather pathetically eager to hear a word of commendation for our past efforts and to feel an acceptance of our continued role as partners in the building of Israel. Possibly we forced the Israelis to think about American Jews more than is usual—though even without the stimulus of tourists it is clear that we are very much on Israel's mind.

Perhaps, too, it was a bad time for this particular discussion. At the beginning of the summer the last truce with the Arabs had not yet been signed, the ruins of the war were all around, refugees were pouring in, mainly from North Africa—and UJA dollars were very scarce. Tempers were a little short, for the country so obviously needed money, initiative, and competent people, not visiting firemen in search of gratitude or "a philosophy of Jewish life." Yet, granting all this, certain attitudes toward American Jews were revealed of probably more than passing significance.

WHEN I arrived early in July there was a perceptible and increasing bustle about the military parade that was to be held on Sunday, July 17, in honor of Herzl's *yortseit*. There was some complaint by the Orthodox about marking a *yortseit* with a parade and even more muttering against desecrating the period of mourning of the Three Weeks, particularly since David Ben Gurion was to give

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AN ARRAY of ideologists has been busy telling us what form the relations between Israel and American Jewry must or must not take, on pain of a variety of predicted penalties. Be that as it may, it seems clear that the ties between American Jewry and Israel will be continuing, various, and close: and all would agree that a first step towards a sound permanent relationship would be for both parties to understand each other better. It is towards this end that ARTHUR HERTZBERG contributes this description and explanation of current attitudes of Israeli Jews, some of which have puzzled recent American visitors, both Zionist and non-Zionist. Mr. Hertzberg is the rabbi of the West End Synagogue in Nashville, Tennessee. Born in 1921, he studied at Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Columbia, and the Jewish Theological Seminary. His article "American Zionism at an Impasse" appeared in the October 1949 COMMENTARY.

a festive diplomatic reception at the end of the day's exercises. The thunder on the Left spoke of the expense involved: *Al Hamishmar,* the organ of Mapam, asked whether the money would not be better spent on refugees or housing, trying hard, as any opposition paper anywhere will do, to embarrass the government. But the people of Tel Aviv seemed to agree with the powers-that-be that a parade would be helpful, possibly necessary.

It was not a case of providing a circus in place of bread. The always restive Arabs would perhaps be impressed by a display of disciplined and well-equipped Jewish military might, and the foreign diplomatic corps might report home on the increasing stability of the new state. There was another reason for the parade, perhaps even more important. The first attempt at such a display in May, on the anniversary of Israel's declaration of independence, had ended in a fiasco that the coffee-house wits were still bitingly comparing to Chelm and Kasrilevke. The foreign press, too, particularly the American, had featured the failure. Now the American tourists' Broadway in Tel Aviv, Ha-Yarkon Street, was jammed with visitors of varying importance and the opportunity was at hand to lay the ghost of Menachem Mendel.

The festive day was hot and sunny. A parade ground had been leveled off north of the city, wooden stands had been erected, and the scramble for tickets became rather intense in the last several days. The bleachers were to a very great extent occupied by people who had lost close relatives in the war. The reviewing stand was packed with dignitaries, including enough *machers* from the United States to hold a fair-sized Zionist convention, UJA conference, or rabbinical assembly. Hebrew predominated in the bleachers, but English was quite definitely the language of the grandstand.

Everything came off with considerable precision. There were sobs as the flag was lowered to half-mast in memory of the fallen, and then the regimental colors came by. Ben Gurion spoke briefly of Herzl, twelve heroes were decorated for valor (four posthumously), and the formations began to pass in review. It was a military performance complete even to the comments of a recently demobilized captain from the Palmach near me as to the greenness of the rookies. Finally even the nurses had marched in review, their white uniforms still amazingly unwilted despite the hot sun (a less hardy American lady of prominence had already suffered sun-stroke in the stands), and the equipment began to move—tanks, guns, mobile kitchens, and machine shops, with three bombers and four fighters buzzing the scene from above. The grandstand began to hum with tales of how these various implements of war had been acquired.

There was the proud glow of self-congratulation on the faces of several Americans who had played roles during the war in the complicated finagling to get these weapons to the beleaguered Israeli Army. One of them started to tell his story—the story of "his" tanks that he had secured—to an Israeli officer by his side. He did not get beyond the first few words. The officer turned to another soldier and began talking about the current activities of some comrades on secret or discreet army purchase and supply missions in various places in the world. It was, even if not consciously intended, a snub.

After the last bit of free *gazoz* had been distributed and as the little circles of street-corner military experts began to disperse, I finally got back to my room on Ben Yehudah Street. My landlady, Mrs. Fein, the widow of a founding father of the Histadrut, was waiting impatiently. As soon as I walked in the door, she burst out:

"Nu ma ata omer achshav? Lo yavou?—Well, what do you say now? They won't come?"

"They" meant the American Jews, about whom we had been arguing almost from the moment of our meeting ten days before. She was convinced that all American Jews ought to come, indeed would come, to Israel, and nothing I said had shaken her certainty. Now her own victorious army had just passed by the balcony and she was sure that there was no more room for argument. "If only they had seen this parade, if only they had seen the parade," she kept repeating.

Mrs. Fein had been landlady to other Americans who had come for a visit and then gone. Indeed, living a short block from Ha-Yarkon Street, she could not help but be aware that of the thousands who had come to visit very few had remained or returned as permanent settlers. For all that, she was certain that they ought to and would come. In part, perhaps, she was so sure because of her own history, for she had left Palestine for a few years in the 30's only to find life in the Galut impossible. I could never explain to her that most Americans would find it hard to adjust to a new country, for she was an old *halutza* who knew that the only way to love Israel properly is first to suffer. "It wouldn't hurt you Americans, either," she assured me often with the mixed wisdom of a mother and pioneer. "You will be all the better Israelis for it."

The one time I tried to win the argument by asking whether Israel could absorb five million American Jews, she looked at me a little contemptuously and simply repeated the phrase "absorptive capacity." I knew what she meant. How could I, a Jew, dare mention "absorptive capacity"? Hadn't the British committed untold crimes in its name? Why think about such things? Jews would come, things would be muddled and a little painful for a while—but really not so bad, for the Americans would bring much money with them and *yihye tov* ("it will be good"), everything would be *beseder gamur*—"OK."

MONEY is, of course, part of the key to understanding the Israeli view of American Jewry. But it is more than a problem of philanthropy or investments: psychological factors and the whole matter of the morale of Israel are involved.

Zionism, at least as expressed in Israel, is certain that what is important in the Jewish present and significant to the Jewish future is being fashioned on the hard and narrow Eastern shore of the Mediterranean. Two generations of Israelis, one of them native-born and bred, have by now come to accept themselves as the chosen vanguard of the Jewish people, without any doubt whatever. Those still in *gola* ("exile"), as every child in Israel knows for certain, are physical or spiritual DP's, whom it is one's duty to save for their own good and the good of the state.

This conviction accounts, of course, for the *élan* that fashioned the many good deeds of recent memory. However, when turned towards American Jewry in the present, it becomes something of a complex.

One hates to be a poor relation. It is all the more difficult for people who are constantly assuring themselves that they are proud, free, and victorious. Israel's reaction to American Jewish aid seems startlingly similar to the mood of England towards America and the Marshall Plan. Israel occasionally accuses the American Jews of having sat out her war just as England sometimes recalls rather bitterly that she fought Hitler alone for a year and a half. Like England, Israel wants more and more aid and yet wants to be on her own as quickly as possible. Neither is very eager to render precise accountings of gratitude, with the important difference that Britain's demeanor has about it a tinge of the lordly disdain of a grand duke receiving alms in his cherry orchard, while Israel is more like the almost adult son who dislikes discussing his allowance with the insufficiently generous old fogies in the family.

The reality remains that Israel must still have outside help for its economic existence and survival, especially in the face of the cutting off of Arab markets and of Europe's desire to import as little as possible. Yet for psychological reasons—and of course because the refugees are a visible problem while unavailable markets are not—the average Israeli will maintain in conversation that the country needs aid only for the refugees. These, they insist quite correctly, are at least as much a charge upon the conscience of American Jews as upon the strained resources of the young state. The truth of the argument is incontrovertible. It is, however, also significant of the need of popular opinion in Israel to insist on financial aid without feeling inferior for taking it—to feel independent in its dependency.

THIS picture is not complete unless one takes into account the variant reactions toward American Jewry of the bourgeois and capitalist groups in Israel on the one hand, and the more precisely formulated doctrinaire viewpoint of the Left on the other.

The middle class has been waiting impatiently for American investments to increase the tempo of economic endeavor. Being politically General Zionist, it looks to like-minded Americans to strengthen free enterprise in Israel, thus providing not only more capital but also a bulwark against further socialization. As you go up the economic scale to the comparatively few people of real wealth, the tone increasingly changes. The industrialists want to be rid of the present strict government regulations and are hopeful that the Americans will break the hold of the new bureaucracy. They seem to want to identify themselves as part of the world of men-of-affairs, with Tel Aviv a main stop on the route of trade and with New York as the headquarters. For this kind of thinking, the American Jew represents the only hope that Israel will escape being a backwater country.

Perhaps there are native General Zionists. I can only report that I did not meet a single one. The middle class seems middle-aged and foreign-born. On the other hand, the Left seems younger in age and the farther left one goes the more *sabra* seems to be the atmosphere. In these circles the attitude is entirely different.

It was the young secretary of a new kibbutz who assured me with complete certainty that the American Jews were simply tools of capitalism interested in keeping down the Israeli working class. To the usual evaluation of American Jewry as deficient in Jewish national feeling, he added the Hashomer Hatzair exegesis about the class structure of Jews in the Diaspora which has made them bourgeois and thus the enemies of socialism in the homeland. As a bourgeoisie, so ran his argument, it was prone to ally itself with religious reaction and was thus incapable of understanding the new secular life being built in Israel. Reaching a hortatory pitch, he concluded that the task before the world-wide *halutz* movement was to save the young for a new life in Israel.

He knew as well as I that every kibbutz, including the one I was visiting, begins with a *taktsiv,* an initial subvention for its capital investments granted by the Jewish Agency, which receives the bulk of its funds from the United States. I asked the question: "But isn't it a peculiar kind of enemy of the Israeli worker and his new life who pays the bill for launching it?" Immediately came the answer, a re-play of the theme of refugees: "You're helping us so that we can absorb refugees, because you don't want them in America."

YET despite the variant attitudes toward American Jews, there is a unanimous desire for immigrants from America. Those who have been coming in lately are the North African Jews, who are quite foreign to Israel in a variety of ways. They are Oriental, Sephardic, and Orthodox in a simple-minded way, whereas Israel is Occidental, Ashkenazi, and increasingly unreligious. I cannot quote them directly, but "off the record" men in government express real fear that the present wave of immigration will go far towards depressing the cultural level of the new society. Some of the more excited are even making dire predictions of a predominantly Levantine state in a generation.

The country still feels the cleavages between older communities of various national origins. Everyone who has been to Israel knows the inevitable witticism about Nahariya—*"es bleibt doch immer deutsch."* The Yemenites, even after a generation, are to this day pretty much an island to themselves, even though there are sporadic cases of intermarriage with Jews of European origin. The recent influx from the DP camps of Europe, though culturally not foreign to the majority of Israelis, poses a problem of a different sort because of scars left by the searing experiences which most of these newcomers have undergone. There is therefore a desire for a stiffening of the population with more healthy Occidental types, who will contribute to the Western tempo that characterizes Israeli life. The greatest reservoir for such a contribution is America.

Add to this a real note of concern for the future of the Jew in America. Pessimism about the future of the Jewish minority in a Gentile world has always been central to the ideology of Zionism—not alone a fear of spiritual disintegration by way of assimilation but also a sense of imminent danger from anti-Semitism. The overwhelming majority of today's population of Israel has arrived after the grimmest possible demonstration of the precariousness of Jewish existence in the Diaspora. After the disasters suffered in their native lands, most Israelis can scarcely understand the security that most American Jews feel in the United States. After all, they argue, it happened in Germany. Why are the Americans so sure that it can't happen there?

Any counter-argument involves trying to prove to the Israeli that America is really different. Sometimes he is half-convinced—and then he shifts ground and preaches *aliya,* immigration to Israel, as a moral commandment rather than a physical necessity. Often, however, he simply disbelieves the assertion. The average Israeli regards the world of the Gentiles as of one piece, characterized everywhere by greater or lesser degrees of Jew-hatred. The Marxists of Mapam usually complete this train of thought by admitting that the United States is still some distance from the advanced stage of the disintegration of capitalism at which Europe has arrived. Nonetheless, by definition, capitalism must collapse everywhere, America included, and during the crisis which will mark the disintegration of the old order a murderous and devastating anti-Semitism will be the chief weapon of reaction. Safety can only be assured in Israel.

If one points out that a world in which American Jews were unsafe would almost certainly be a world at war and one in which Israel would be in equal danger, the Israeli answers by pointing out the difference between his own wartime experience and that of European Jewry: "At least we could fight on our own soil, as we have been doing for years. A minority in a Gentile country will simply go to the slaughter."

FOR all this long-range pessimism about America there is yet a great admiration for American achievements and culture and a desire to learn and emulate. Though there are still faint traces of an early adolescent mood of knowing better than anyone else—the last echo of Menachem Mendel's frequent assurance that he could advise Rothschild on high finance—American Jewish technicians are looked to for guidance.

The influence of America is also very perceptible in other than the technological fields. Leonard Bernstein is very welcome as a conductor of the symphony orchestra, which is soon also to have Serge Koussevitsky as its guest. Harold Clurman was called last year to direct the Habimah production of *Montserrat,* and two of the current great successes of the young Chamber Theater are *Dear Ruth* and *Born Yesterday*. The dance orchestras at various cafés play much American popular music along with the staple Central European waltzes. Among the large number of books now appearing in translation, particularly in the new paper-backed series for popular consumption, there is a high proportion of American volumes. Damon Runyon and Erle Stanley Gardner, along with many a recent best-seller, and of course the writings of Bartley Crum and Robert St. John on Israel, are all available in Hebrew translation.

Despite this American influence, what is markedly absent is any major contact with the culture of American Jews. There are three kinds of Jewish literary expression on the soil of the United States, in Hebrew, Yiddish, and English. But none of them, for various reasons, seems to have anything important to say to the Israeli. For the sake of completeness, as well as their own intrinsic merit, the usual galaxy of American Hebrew poets and one or two novelists and essayists are usually represented in the anthologies and mentioned in the literature classes in the high schools, but they are not taken very seriously. The only two Americans who are really considered in the swim of modern Hebrew literature as understood in Tel Aviv are Reuven Grossman and Simon Halkin—but both are now citizens of Israel. The purists of literary gossip sessions allow a certain classicism to the language of the New York group, but this is not approved of as a virtue. On the contrary, it is taken to show a lack of touch with the more slangy realities of modern Jewish life.

The subject matter, too, of our American Hebraists is not regarded as relevant. Israel has little time to sentimentalize the East European ghetto that is now dead, and anyway that has already been done in classical form by Sholom Aleichem in Berkovitch's masterful Hebrew translation, which is required reading in all the schools. The attempts made by Efros and Lisitsky to bring the idealized Indian into Hebrew poetry are no more than strange curiosities to a society which has just been fighting Arabs. The only American creations in Hebrew that seem to be at all widely known are a couple of devastating pictures by Halkin of the American Jewish community, which are taken as expert testimony to the correctness of the accepted Israeli opinion that all is over for the Diaspora.

YIDDISH is in an even more anomalous position. The most recent DP immigration is to a great extent Yiddish-speaking. For all the protests from some circles in the United States, no Yiddish daily has been established in Tel Aviv. The melting pot is being made to work at forced draft. However, the Histadrut itself, seemingly under some pressure from its Yiddish-speaking section in America, has recently established a serious literary quarterly in Yiddish with the participation of writers from Israel, America, and the rest of the Diaspora. It is edited by the first-rate Polish Jewish poet and ex-partisan, Abraham Sutskever. One night at a literary *soirée* I engaged him in conversation about the future of Yiddish in Israel. He was of course aware that it is disappearing as the language of the younger generation of Israelis, perhaps even more rapidly than it has vanished from the mouths of the American-born first generation. For all that, he believes passionately in the importance and future of Yiddish both in Israel and elsewhere in the world. I asked him how he could maintain that faith and he looked at me with some annoyance and great intensity and said: *"Ich gloib*—I believe."

I asked friends among the Hebrew literati about Sutskever and his Yiddishist position. They all liked and admired Sutskever as a poet and were rather impressed by his devotion—"a stubborn Litvak" was one comment—but they saw no place for the language in Israel. Yiddish is ghetto and Israel exists to forget the ghetto. That is why Habimah's great production of the *Dybbuk* is increasingly foreign to Israel and is, indeed, under attack from popular opinion, which seeks expression of its own actual life. The Yiddish writers of America are translated occasionally and read insofar as they reflect the sorrow and anger of the Jewish soul at Hitler's death camps, but their usual themes of the Poland and Russia of their youth are not the mood of the new state.

American Jewish literature in English is just as foreign to Israel, though for different reasons. There is no language barrier; after a generation of the British mandate, English is the second language of Israel, and for those who do not read it there is no lack of competent translators. What is foreign is the problems of our intellectuals and the life to which they are related.

The Israeli does not read our many novels about anti-Semitism because to their authors he would answer brusquely: "Stop tearing yourself to pieces and become a whole person again in Israel." The attempt presently being made by our avant-garde to search out the meaning, and indeed the virtues, of "alienation," sounds outlandish when mentioned at Negba, the kibbutz which saved the Southern front during the war, or at a table in Tel Aviv's literary café, the Kasit.

The Israeli is passionately engaged in the enterprise of feeling native and indigenous and sees no virtue in standing outside society. He may agree that certain ultimate metaphysical problems will eventually have to be considered again by his literature, which is at the moment almost totally concerned with the immediate problems of his country. But he will insist that the Israeli mind intends to face outward towards the world and the heavens from within the boundaries of a strong national consciousness. If our avant-garde is right in regarding Kafka as its hero, it is quite revealing that Max Brod, Kafka's friend and literary executor, who lives in Tel Aviv, is seldom mentioned except by those who grew up in Central Europe. There are younger writers in Israel who are now attempting to write like the early Hemingway, with indifferent results, but to my knowledge no one over there is imitating Kafka.

Despite the prevailing stereotype that American Jewish life is disintegrating, there are quite perceptible stirrings not too far beneath the surface of an intense interest in what is actually going on here, on the other side of the Atlantic. There is today a quite significant contingent of Israeli young men and women in America or on their way here in order to complete their education. The various delegates of the *halutz* movements and many other Israelis in America on government business will no doubt take home with them a greater understanding of the American Jewish community—and perhaps a deeper respect.

On the cultural level, various leaders of opinion desire greatly a broadening of contact with American Jewish life. Much of what is published in America is read very eagerly in many of the leading circles. On the desks of at least two of the Cabinet ministers and a half-dozen of the officials immediately below Cabinet rank, I saw any number of current American Jewish periodicals, including a fair sampling of the various Zionist publications and the most recent issues of COMMENTARY. The interviews, in fact, were a bit unusual in that I was asked at least as many questions about various matters that were being discussed in these journals as I was permitted to ask questions about the current life of Israel. Within the last few weeks Dr. Jacob Horvitz, the literary editor of *Haaretz,* Israel's leading daily, has visited the United States, chiefly in order to find ways of increasing the knowledge of American Jewish life in Israel.

Yet, on the other hand, as leadership in government is assumed to a greater extent by men now around thirty, who largely staff its middle echelons, the sense of apartness from American Jewry is perhaps, at least for a while, likely to increase. These hardened veterans of the youth movements and the war, most of them either native-born or educated, do not have the ties to the Diaspora of their elders now in the cabinet. As one of them said to me: "Unlike Ben Gurion and the others, my generation has not had a lifetime of experience in the World Zionist movement as leaders of its international sections. We have not had long nights at Zionist congresses working together or arguing with leaders from the Diaspora. I don't know these people, for I spent my formative years in the kibbutz, the Jewish Brigade, and the Haganah."

I am quoting here from a long conversation in a press-office car on our way to the Galilee. That day, about noon, we stopped at a tent city of new arrivals and stepped out of a Chrysler into squalor and misery. This was the one aspect of Israel today for which, this ex-captain and I had both agreed, Israel and American Jewry were equally responsible. He had certainly done his share in the recent blockade-running days when he had worked in the illegal immigration and I could remember at least some personal participation from America in that effort. We got out of the car to ask the way to the office of the commander of the camp. The first three refugees whom we attempted to stop looked us over, eyed our clean shirts, the cameras slung from our shoulders, and the big car behind us. They glared at us and silently walked away.

BRITISH LABOR'S HALF-WAY HOUSE

The Socialist Government Faces the Electorate

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

LONDON

IN DECIDING not to hold a general election during 1949, the Labor government has defied the combined pressure of the Conservative opposition, the Liberals, and its own left wing, all of whom, though for different reasons, had been pressing for an early appeal to the electorate. It also (or so it is believed) disproved the confidential forecasts made to the State Department by the United States Embassy here, which is rather apt to reflect Tory opinion and in any case has no great faith in the political strength of Clement Attlee and his colleagues. Even more important, the Labor government gave itself time to complete its 1945 election program and to initiate the first "crisis measures."

Completion of Labor's election program involves the final legislative acts required to nationalize the steel industry and to curtail the powers of the House of Lords. However, insofar as the present final session of the 1945 Parliament is concerned with the crisis arising from the balance-of-payments problem, it can legitimately be said to be doing work that any legislative assembly—whether controlled by the Conservative or Labor party—would have to do. There are differences in emphasis: a Tory government would probably cut expenditure on education before pruning the military estimates, rather than the other way around, and it is unlikely that a Conservative chancellor would have stiffened the profits tax. But by and large, the leadership of the two parties are a good deal closer together than their respective followers, many of whom still hold the simple belief that "the crisis" can best be met by the full-blooded application of some favored political nostrum.

IN RECENT weeks two members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, Australia and New Zealand, have seen the passing of their well-established Labor governments. Now, after more than four years of Labor party rule—a period marked by crises both foreign and domestic—Britain's own socialist government faces the test of its first peacetime general election. The specific issues of the election range in scope from the nationalization of the steel industry to the devaluation of the pound, but it is a much broader question that will ultimately turn the tide: has the attempt to create a welfare state in one of the most highly industrialized countries in the world succeeded or failed? Here GEORGE LICHTHEIM raises this question with all its implications and evaluates the Labor party's four-year performance in office. Mr. Lichtheim is the London correspondent for a number of Israeli publications, as well as a frequent contributor to the London socialist *Tribune*. His article "Behind Bevin's Hostility to Israel" appeared in the March 1949 COMMENTARY.

Does this mean, then, that the socialist experiment undertaken in 1945 has come to an end? Both Liberals and Tories believe that it does, and are saying so openly; the former with a touch of sorrowful regret, the latter with an air of "I told you so," but both with conviction. There is much to bear them out. Certainly there is nothing specifically socialist about the government's latest crisis measures, and British Labor had promised to solve Britain's postwar problems by the methods of socialist planning. To argue, as of course most Labor supporters do, that the opposition has no alternative to offer the voters, and that Labor is likely to come back (though with a reduced majority), is not a completely satisfying answer to the critics. For even if Labor is returned to power this year—and this is by no means certain—it looks on present indications as though the next Labor government would have to spend much of its time passing measures demanded by non-political experts (most of whom are in fact non-socialists). This represents a sharp descent from the high hopes of 1945. As the Communists, and some socialists, are not slow to point out, it is "not what the workers voted for."

To this, the Labor party has two answers. First, it asserts that the electorate voted not for socialism but for full employment and the welfare state, and that Labor has made good on its promises in this field. Second, it holds that socialist planning is not the answer to Britain's "external" economic problem, simply because the problem is inherently insoluble in terms of British national policies alone, of whatever kind. In other words, Labor contends that the function of a British government at the present time cannot be to "solve" Britain's economic problems, but to make it possible for Europe as a whole to solve its problems with the aid of the United States. This contention, needless to say, is rarely made in public, if only because Transport House believes that many undecided voters can be persuaded to support Labor by talk of "economic independence." But it represents the inmost conviction of the government, and particularly of the group of advisers—socialists and neutral experts—around Ernest Bevin and Sir Stafford Cripps.

Differences of opinion center upon the degree of help that can be expected from America. There are those who doubt whether the administration, let alone Congress, will actively help to set Britain and Europe on their feet if it means cutting tariffs in earnest. There are others who have persuaded themselves, notably since the success of last September's talks in Washington, that America can and will help, even to the extent of underwriting Britain's sterling obligations to India and other overseas countries.

This last, incidentally, would be the most practicable way of turning President Truman's Point Four into reality, and Whitehall seems confident that things are moving in the right direction at long last. The industrialization of Southeast Asia and, possibly, of the Middle East, would then be undertaken in the guise of a massive program of American capital investment in countries that are large holders of "blocked" sterling, thus relieving Britain of an intolerable burden and at the same time placing the weight of American economic power behind the Commonwealth's crumbling political bastions. Britain would profit indirectly from being at last enabled to right its economic imbalance, and with Labor in power the proceeds would go to the maintenance and expansion of the welfare state. (This, of course, assumes the continuance of a Fair Deal administration in Washington.)

The program is clearly liberal-labor rather than socialist-labor, or, to be exact, its socialist-labor component is smaller than seemed likely in 1945, being confined to such domestic measures as the Labor party can squeeze from the existing social set-up. Nationalization in its present bureaucratic form is more a means to cheapen the cost of coal and transport to the rest of industry than a step towards "industrial democracy" or "workers' control." And though the machinery of central economic planning has been sustained and even improved, especially on the statistical side, it has not been used so far to abrogate property rights in the interest of efficiency. Nor, it is fair to add, has it been seriously employed to interfere with the worker's freedom of movement from job to job. The Labor government has in fact refrained from breaking with its liberal allies, whether at home or abroad, or even from giving them serious cause for concern. It has deliberately built a half-way house.

The chief aim and the *sine qua non* of Labor's political strategy is to keep the United States from supporting the Tories, while insinuating into the minds of the average British voter a vague suspicion that Winston Churchill is a little too subservient to American "free enterprise" thinking. The Tories are actually doing everything in their power to confirm this suspicion. By constantly echoing the more stupid sort of American criticism of Britain, they have well-nigh contrived to make Labor look the more "national" of the two parties. At the same time, the "imperial" enthusiasm generated whenever large numbers of Tories meet in conference has the effect of making middle-of-the-roaders shudder and move closer to Labor. The Conservative party has some intelligent leaders among its Parliamentary figures, but a popular Tory rally is a pretty frightening sight, overpowering in its display of well-meaning, but retrograde and potentially dangerous, imbecility.

There is, nevertheless, a distinct possibility of a Tory comeback, assisted by direct Tory control of most of the press and all of the films, and indirect control of the BBC, whose programs subtly and perhaps unconsciously, but quite definitely, condition the electorate to regard socialism as a sort of foreign excrescence upon the surface of national life. This absence of a new spirit in the field of publicity—some of it state-controlled, as in the case of broadcasting—is one of several symptoms of weakness traceable to Labor's continued lack of self-assurance. There is as yet no socialist governing elite, or, what amounts to the same thing, no wholesale infusion of socialist spirit into the existing bureaucratic hierarchy outside certain limited fields connected with the administration of the social services. (This is also true of the boards of the new nationalized industries, where the managerial element is careful to avoid the danger of being mistaken for the controlling force of an experiment in socialist planning.)

As every visit to a cinema shows, the privately-owned newsreel companies, despite their pose of political neutrality, are carrying on a blatant propaganda campaign on behalf of Toryism and the status quo. It is as though the Labor government, against which their sneers are directed, were not His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, but an obscure sect of political upstarts unaccountably in possession of the seats of authority. Social snobbery; systematic obfuscation of the government's constructive achievements; a careful selection of news items designed to contrast the "enduring" elements of society—royalty, the Established Church, popular customs, sport, etc.—with the "transitory" features of Labor rule; the deliberate ignoring of *all* socialist, democratic, or labor activity and achievement, both at home and abroad—these and a hundred other means (down to photographic trick shots contrasting the "noble" countenances of Churchill and other Tory leaders with the "plebeian" features of Labor ministers) are constantly employed to impress upon the public the "illegitimacy" of its political choice of 1945.

Nor is this propaganda actively resented by audiences, aside from the minority of conscious socialists and Labor supporters. The British working class, a sizable proportion of which continues to support the Tories, is as yet no more than half-convinced that Labor has come to stay, while the middle and professional classes, having recovered from their short-lived radicalism of 1945, are already more than half convinced that the socialist experiment has proved a failure. This mood could be changed by the result of another election, but for the time being the tide is running strongly in the direction of treating Labor as an adjunct to a settled society founded on non-socialist principles. Herbert Morrison's "silent revolution" is very silent indeed.

ELECTIONS, however, are not won by propaganda alone, and the British Labor experiment must be viewed against the factual background of postwar Britain's efforts to attain "economic independence." This much-used phrase can be given a somewhat more precise meaning by contrasting Britain's postwar financial position with that of 1939. It then appears that although the economy showed a net deficit on its overseas balance-of-payments before the war, it is only since 1945 that it has lacked the reserves necessary to cover temporary balance-of-payments deficits without foreign aid. Before 1939 Britain possessed overseas investments (valued at approximately five billion pounds by a writer in the *Economic Journal* for June-September 1943) which not only contributed an annual "invisible" income of about two hundred million pounds but, more important, constituted a cushion for its international economic position. Its disappearance, taken together with the growing production disparity between Europe and the Western Hemisphere, has meant that the postwar adaptation to long-range changes in the flow of world trade could not be carried out by Britain unaided, but required American dollar loans and, eventually, outright gifts.

It follows that for Britain to become "economically independent," it is not sufficient for the immediate balance-of-payments gap to be stopped. Britain must also rebuild its capital assets, both at home and abroad. The extent of this need can be gauged when it is borne in mind that the war destroyed about a quarter of the total national wealth, if obsolescence in the industrial structure is taken into account. The war did not, it is true, liquidate the bulk of Britain's overseas investment. Only about a quarter (£1,118 million) was sold outright to pay for imports before lend-lease became effective. But the remainder either declined in value or was offset by the colossal growth of sterling indebtedness, now exceeding three billion pounds, to countries like India and Egypt.

On top of these losses, the war accentuated long-range changes in the relation between import prices of food and raw materials, and export prices of British manufactures. The prices of the former rose in comparison with the latter, making more difficult the government's declared program of raising Britain's annual exports, composed almost entirely of manufactures, to 175 per cent of the 1938 figure. The sum of these changes presented a picture such as to cause even Churchill in 1945 to talk bluntly (but in private) of the country's being "bankrupt."

THE Labor government, having entered into this inheritance, was thus faced with the double problem of rebuilding Britain's capital assets and of raising domestic living standards. The latter aim is sometimes treated as though it were a political fad, irrelevant to the "national emergency." Actually, the sharp decline in living standards during the war had a direct bearing upon the lowered productivity of British workers. Between 1938 and 1944, *per capita* expenditure on consumer goods and services declined by sixteen per cent, while in the United States and Canada, despite the war, it rose in the same proportion. By the autumn of 1945 people in Britain were in urgent need of relief after the strain and exhaustion of the war years. Yet it was at this moment that a vast capital investment program was started, and rightly so, to replace wartime losses and obsolescence, while on top of this the export drive got under way. Lend-lease having been cut off with surprising abruptness a few weeks after the Labor government came into office, there was no alternative but to go to Washington for a loan and, eventually, for Marshall Plan aid.

What has become clear since then is that despite loans and ERP the long-range problem is fundamentally insoluble in terms of Britain's own productive efforts, largely because the terms of trade have shifted permanently against European countries exporting manufactures. Both Western Hemisphere and other overseas prices of goods imported into Britain have risen much more since 1945 than prices of British exports, and there is apparently no prospect of returning to the pre-war equilibrium between import and export prices, at which Britain barely managed to keep solvent. Devaluation has accentuated the change by further depressing the market price of British exports. The fact that this was brought about by a comparatively moderate recession in the United States, leading in turn to a slight drop in Britain's dollar earnings, points to the extreme instability of Britain's postwar position.

This, of course, is not a question of socialist finance. It simply means that socialism by itself is no cure for impoverishment. The postwar experience has already demonstrated that many Keynesian techniques for maintaining full employment, whatever their value for a country like America, are irrelevant to the problems of the British economy. Full employment is assured as long as Britain can pay for imported raw materials on which her export industries depend; what is not assured, and cannot be assured by internal financial manipulation, is the ability to finance such imports.

THE conjunction of these changes is frequently represented as a rebuke to Labor theorists, but the total picture does not encourage the notion that a non-socialist government would have done better. It was not in Britain's power to prevent the rise in world food and raw material costs relative to the prices of British exports. A Churchill government might, indeed, have delayed India's rise to independence and its turning economically toward the United States, but only at the cost of a disastrous and hopeless struggle. Instead, by keeping India in the Commonwealth, the Labor government has scored its one great success in the field of foreign relations. The grant of independence to India, without a struggle and with no strings attached, may indeed have proved the final straw to the back of the sterling camel (Churchill would probably have repudiated the sterling debts to India along with the promise of independence), but it seems likely to pay off, politically and economically, in the long run. On this issue Labor also had the full support of liberal middle-class opinion, both in Britain and in the United States.

The carrying out of the Labor program with regard to India is interesting and suggestive, especially against the background of the complete failure of British policy in Germany, where a definitely socialist policy—notably in the Ruhr—was required to make democracy a success. Where Labor could fall back on its liberal-radical heritage, as in relation to India, it showed political courage and reaped a corresponding reward. Where specifically modern issues presented themselves, as in Germany, it fumbled and missed the goal. Over India, even the Tories were uncertain in supporting Churchill's intransigence, and in the end have given way without much signs of struggle. Over Germany, they had no difficulty in cooperating with Bevin's policy, or lack of policy, which resulted in control of the Ruhr being handed back to the former owners. Thus the Labor government scored its principal success where it was in fact applying non-socialist policies: Indian independence was actually an important condition of close Anglo-American cooperation. Socialization of the industry of the Ruhr was not—quite the contrary.

The upshot, then, is that neither the socialists nor the Tories have got what they wanted, the ambiguity of the term "Labor" concealing the fact that a good part of the Labor party's program was and is in fact liberal-radical rather than socialist. The degree of Labor's success or failure was from the start determined by factors over which no British government could have had much control: as an economic unit Britain depends upon the world market, which in turn depends upon the United States. Only in the sphere of domestic policy has Labor made something like an approach to socialist planning, and it is here that the political struggle is waged with real and growing bitterness.

THE national economy that came under socialist control for the first time in 1945 was not only impoverished by the war; it also suffered from the pre-war legacy of insufficient capital investment, stifled competition, mass unemployment, and inequitable distribution of income. Between the wars, Britain never invested more than fifteen per cent of the national product in new capital construction, including housing. Industrial equipment lagged by comparison not only with the United States but with Germany and other countries, and productivity per worker rose more slowly than in the rest of the Western world. By contrast, the rise in productivity since 1946 has been sharper than anywhere else in Europe (from 97 to 108, taking 1938 as the base year) and much greater than a similar rise in Britain after World War I, while outlay on new capital construction last year engaged twenty-two per cent of the entire national income, as against fifteen per cent in 1938. This intensified effort was largely made possible by Marshall Plan aid, but its second pillar has been a rate of taxation higher than in any other country in the world. Central and local authorities between them take forty per cent of the national income, and since small taxpayers have had their contributions considerably reduced, the bulk of this huge assessment falls squarely upon middle and higher incomes. This fact is behind the Conservative and Liberal complaints that the middle class is being wiped out, and though the claim is extravagant there is just enough truth in it to make Labor strategists wonder whether they can hold a sizable fraction of the middle-class vote in this year's election.

What is causing most concern to socialists is the growing evidence that while the middle class continues to feel the pinch, the working class has failed to hold all its gains. This is perhaps no more than a clumsy way of saying that the whole country has only lately discovered the extent of its impoverishment. Labor supporters have hitherto been able to make two important points: that despite the vast capital investment program, living standards have regained their 1938 level; and that within the increased national income a larger proportional share has gone to wage-earners. The first assertion is true of the national standard of life as a whole, taking into account both the rise in working-class and the fall in middle-class incomes. The second point has been somewhat blunted in the past year, for although wage-earners work slightly shorter hours and draw considerably larger nominal wages than they did in 1938, a rise in prices has recently tended to cancel out some of the gains made in the postwar period. As a result of this and other factors, the lower-paid workers are now once more in danger of being pushed below the poverty line, and the whole process of social equalization seems to have come to a temporary halt. True, the working class still draws a larger proportion of the national income than before the war; but the total consumable income—i.e., after deducting the cost of capital equipment, the larger outlay on defense, and the flow of exports to other countries—is smaller than it was in 1938, and the proportion of income retained after taxation is smaller for all groups than it was before the war. It is only among the worst-paid workers and the former unemployed that there is a definite sense of economic gain since the "social revolution."

British society is now so securely wedded to the principle of supplying every individual with a minimum standard of living, that no conceivable political change could affect it. A Conservative government would doubtless refuse to subsidize low-rent housing on anything like the present scale, but it would not challenge the principle of leveling out income differentials by taxation. In this sense the welfare state has come to stay. It has not yet, however, become as notable a feature of the social landscape as Labor supporters would like to make themselves believe, or as their opponents, both in England and the United States, sometimes charge. Defense and capital investment are absorbing such huge chunks of the national income, and price inflation presses so relentlessly upon a domestic market denuded of most exportable consumer goods, that the social services can do no more than even out the worst income inequalities. The health service, for example, though extremely costly, is a much less impressive affair than it was planned to be in the palmy days of 1946, when there was talk of establishing elaborate health centers in every community.

Much the same is true of education. In this field, however, Labor has been hampered not merely by lack of funds but by a characteristic reluctance to tackle a really thorny issue. Thus, while the school-leaving age has been raised from fourteen to fifteen, and efforts are being made to improve the standards of elementary schooling, nothing has been done to eliminate the notorious cleavage between the products of the elementary schools and those of the "public" (that is, private) schools. The complexity of this problem can be gauged from the fact that nearly all Labor politicians and intellectuals, while deploring the existence of the "public" schools, are determined to send their own children to them. It is true that "public" schools now accept a larger proportion of non-paying pupils, but this system merely serves to siphon off the brighter children of working-class parentage, and the class structure of British society is such that entry into the "higher" educational milieu automatically entails the acceptance of social and political standards the reverse of those which a socialist society seeks to inculcate.

The official Labor party solution of the problem is to improve the quality of state-controlled education, meanwhile allowing the "public" schools to die of inanition—the hope being that the intelligentsia will gradually turn away from them. This it shows no inclination to do. From a recent controversy between Richard H. S. Crossman and others, one gathers the impression that in the long run a conflict may be brewing between those socialists who dislike the public schools on principle, and those who would retain them for the purpose of raising a consciously socialist elite as the governing class of the new society. At present Labor is content to ignore both the privileged schools and the no less privileged universities of Oxford and Cambridge—perhaps the real centers of power, measured in social rather than in financial terms—just as it continues to ignore the closely related problem of democratizing the armed forces. Their turn, it is implied, will come later. For the time being, there is no energy to spare from bread-and-butter problems.

"ACCIDENTS of history," said the *Economist* in a recent article, "insulated the British economy in the inter-war years from the effects of neglecting efficiency, but they are now falling upon us in their full weight." These were the years during which the Labor party grew into a mass movement and acquired a clearly defined political program. That program inevitably laid stress on economic security and social equality rather than on productivity. It was assumed that, for Britain at any rate, the problem of production had been solved, and the unsolved problems were those of promoting greater social equality and preventing recurrent mass unemployment. Full employment, indeed, appeared as the economic complement of social democracy (because unequal income distribution and complete freedom for private enterprise led to oversaving, and oversaving led to crises and mass unemployment), and Labor, as the workers' party, presented itself as the historic instrument for effecting the transition from an unregulated to a regulated economy. Whether the latter should be termed "socialism" or "planned capitalism" seemed a hair-splitting distinction important only to academic theorists.

From the standpoint of Labor's election tactics, the Keynesian economic analysis and the political program built upon it had the inestimable advantage of blurring the lines between "capitalism" and "socialism," so that socialist ideas could be put forward in the guise of "practical proposals" for regulating the domestic economy—proposals that Tories and Liberals could not resist without putting themselves out of court with the voters. If it was not actually assumed that socialism could come in by the back door, it was certainly taken for granted that its coming would take place by an agreed retreat from laissez-faire. No serious political party, after all, could resist "planning," but only Labor, it was asserted, knew *how* to plan, because only Labor, being the workers' party, was ready to plan on socialist lines.

What has happened since 1945 has not so far invalidated the negative part of the Labor party's formula for turning Britain by gradual stages into a socialist economy: it is still evident that the Conservatives do not know how to plan (their most "advanced" document, the Industrial Charter, lays stress on corporatism rather than on national planning). It has, however, become extremely doubtful whether Labor can effectively plan an economy whose main problem is no longer unemployment but low productivity. In order to pay its way in the world, Britain must produce not merely more goods, but more goods at cheaper cost. Productivity, it is true, is increasing; but it is not increasing fast enough to keep step with the national emergency. Devaluation became inevitable when it turned out that Britain could balance its accounts with the rest of the world only at the price of cutting its domestic standard of living. But lower living standards add no incentive to production.

After more than four years of Labor rule, socialist economists who strongly support the Labor government, like Professor Arthur Lewis and Dr. Thomas Balogh, have joined such anti-planners as Professor Lionel Robbins in stating plainly that results have fallen short of targets. Indeed, the very word "target" has become a laughing-stock. There is no real drive behind the ministerial exhortations to workers and employers to achieve this or that "target," and "planning" has for this reason been brought into disrepute. As one critic put it, "One can plan by direction alone, or by inducement alone, but one cannot plan by exhortation alone, when the major result of one's actions is to make the inducements work in the opposite direction. Nearly all the planning in this country in the last three years, with its apparatus of targets and speeches, has been of this character, and that is why all the targets have been unfulfilled. . . . This is not planning but merely pretending to plan." (Arthur Lewis, *Principles of Economic Planning.*)

Professor Lewis is a liberal socialist on the right wing of the government's defenders. Like many of his colleagues he would like to see controls and rationing abolished, save for a few commodities, and "planning by inducement," i.e. long-range control of market prices via taxation, take the place of present policies. Dr. Balogh, who stands further to the left, is convinced that only "planning by direction" can make the experiment work. Direction of labor does not frighten him, if it is accompanied by tighter control over capital. But both are agreed that "planning by exhortation" is nearly useless. In this they are now joined by nearly all economists, civil servants, and even politicians.

There are really only two ways of making planning more effective than it is in Britain at present. One is to intensify its working by more detailed bureaucratic centralization, by abrogation of trade-union rights and democratic controls, by state-imposed wage differentials, by massive direction of labor, and sequestration of capital—in the last resort, by the processes adopted under totalitarianism. This choice is ruled out not merely by the legal and political framework of the existing parliamentary democracy, but (a fact usually ignored by such liberal anti-planners as Hayek) by the character of the democratic labor movement itself: before the Stalinists and other totalitarians could impose their version of planning, they had to smash not only liberal democracy but the labor movement as well. In Britain the labor movement is not likely to be smashed, and its leaders—whether leftist or rightist, whether Bevan or Bevin—will never compromise with totalitarianism. The solution of "planning from above," without recourse to democratic control, can therefore be ruled out.

The other, somewhat less disagreeable, course is to dilute the wine of planning, full employment, and social security, with a little laissez-faire water in the hope of making it more potable. This is the solution recommended by the *Economist,* the Manchester *Guardian,* and Labor's liberal well-wishers and semi-allies generally. Its advocacy rests upon the consideration that while socialism is no doubt very fine, "human nature" nonetheless demands that the goal be approached by cautious and unhurried steps. Full employment, it is pointed out, can remove one of the few existing powerful incentives to hard work and efficiency, to wit, the fear of losing one's job. If everyone has his work and his minimum income guaranteed, there is no particular reason why he should make that extra effort which sharp competition for jobs undoubtedly does tend to promote. Social equality, too, is desirable only to the extent that it does not interfere with the human urge for advancement, as the trade unions in fact recognize when they resist the ironing-out of wage differentials between skilled and unskilled workers. In short, it is contended that planning can only be made more effective, and Britain more efficient, if the planners will admit that they need to plan on liberal-capitalist rather than socialist lines.

What these critics would like best is not a Tory government but something like the contemporary socialist regime in Sweden, which devotes most of its energy to making capitalism more efficient and less inhuman. The Swedish socialists, it is pointed out, have not nationalized any of Sweden's basic industries, nor have they tried to construct an elaborate planning apparatus. The implication—although it is admitted in these quarters that in Britain coal mining and transport had to be nationalized to bring industrial costs down—is that British Labor might do worse than follow the Scandinavian example. The British economy would still, in some sense, be planned, and the country would still be governed by the Labor party, but the attempt to "build socialism in our time" would be halted. Instead, Labor would bend its main efforts to the task of making British industry (most of it capitalist) more efficient.

The weakness of this viewpoint is that, in its desire to take the sting out of political debate, it pretends that all problems are basically technical and can be solved without reference to social motivations. This is just the sort of thing that the British worker, and especially the active Laborite, resents most. The point can be established by asking what should be the criterion of successful nationalization. The leading liberal organs of opinion would undoubtedly reply "efficiency," the implication being that where nationalization can be shown to have important technical and economic advantages, as in the case of coal and railways, it is justified on objective grounds. But to Labor supporters it is equally important that "workers' control" should become a reality, that the workers should be actively associated with the management of industry, and that the whole industrial sphere should be run on democratic rather than authoritarian lines. And they will add that this is the key to higher productivity!

Here is an issue that simply cannot be brushed off as "technical" or subjected to some sort of statistical measurement. In the last resort it is a question of political faith. Socialists regard state control as a step to genuine socialization—industrial democracy plus planning—and they reject as naive or politically determined the "objective" managerial appraisal which ignores the workers' growing dissatisfaction with their present impersonal status. On this issue even the Tories with their milk-and-water corporatism are probably closer to social reality than the intellectual spokesmen of the neo-liberal school.

Judged by this test, the Labor government's greatest failure has been its refusal to link the issue of workers' participation in management with that of public ownership. No attempt has been made to represent the nationalization of key industries as a measure involving a profound change in social relationships throughout industry. The government, in fact, has throughout spoken the technical language of the "managerial revolution," even where its actions have been openly welcomed by its supporters as steps towards socialism. This ambiguity, it is hardly necessary to point out, is the essence of Fabianism. It has certainly bewildered the Tories and disarmed the technicians, who had braced themselves for a struggle against long-haired theorists and to their great relief found themselves addressed in their own language by men who shared their concern for efficiency above everything else. But in the process it has also confused and saddened the labor movement. It may even have taken the heart out of it.

The dull and spiritless little ceremony at which Attlee inaugurated the official establishment of the National Coal Board in January 1947 has become the symbol of the whole experiment. It was no doubt to be expected that the Red Flag would not be shown on this occasion (after all, it is not even shown at the annual Labor Party Conference), but something might have been done, at least in the mining areas, to give the festive air of a national victory celebration to the occasion. Nothing of the sort was even attempted; there was not even the dimmest note of Labor triumph. A former coal owner and a retired admiral were put in charge of the Coal Board, to the profound indifference of everyone concerned. The Board immediately began to haggle with the miners about wages and working conditions, and eventually reached a settlement which certainly represented a great advance for the miners. But although there has been plenty of talk, and some action, about production committees composed of workers and technicians, nothing was done to dramatize the change of ownership. Instead, Sir Stafford Cripps went out of his way to inform a Labor audience that syndicalism was out of date and that in any case few workers were "as yet" fit for managerial jobs.

By the time it was the railways' turn, public boredom with the whole subject of nationalization had grown so profound that even the Tories gave up trying to make an election issue out of it. The proposed nationalization of steel, it is true, has roused Tory anger, but although it excites Churchill and Lord Woolton, it leaves their supporters cold and does not, by now, greatly interest Labor voters.

The fact is that "public ownership" has come to mean state control, and state control has come to mean bureaucracy. This equation the Labor party owes to its spiritual ancestors, the Webbs, whose victory is now complete, for even the Tories have swallowed state ownership of mines and transport, and the *Economist* supports it on the ground that it is likely to bring industrial costs down. But if social revolution à la Webb and Morrison turns out to mean no more than this, then we shall wait in vain for Labor to build "socialism in our time."

We shall also wait in vain for a socialist solution of the British production crisis, for although "neutral" technicians and efficiency experts may deny it, the British workers in this generation will not give of their best unless an appeal is made to their deeper collective feelings. "The old belief that there are reserves of productivity, to be summoned by oratorical magic from the vasty deeps of the Labor movement, has disappeared," writes the *Economist* in an ironical appraisal of the government's policy. But the "reserves of productivity" did and do exist. Exhortation has failed because it has not been accompanied by really rapid and dramatic changes in the social structure and in the general quality of social life. If the Labor government now has no choice but to revert to orthodox methods of stimulating efficiency, the fault lies not with "human nature" but with its own failure to rise to the unique opportunity offered it by the election victory of 1945.

This is not to say that the main accomplishments of the past four years are in danger. The house that Labor has built is not going to collapse. But it remains a half-way house. Labor's liberal critics are probably right in holding that, short of totalitarianism, there can now be no socialist solution of the British crisis, and that nothing now remains but an ordered retreat to the orthodox Keynesian position, to be executed, according to one's choice, under Labor or Tory leadership. Britain must be made more efficient, even if it means jettisoning some of the hopes of 1945-46. This conclusion is inescapable. What should not be forgotten, however, is that for a fleeting moment the opportunity given by popular fervor to master the problem along socialist lines did exist.

A HUMANIST RELIGION FOR MODERN MEN

Judaism as a This-Worldly Way of Life

ISRAEL KNOX

IT IS by now hardly news that there is a reviving interest among younger Jewish thinkers and writers in religion, as such, and in Judaism, in particular. It would also appear that there is dissatisfaction among these writers with the present condition of Judaism in America and with the quality of Jewish religious thinking. They find in it much that is concerned with "time" and little that has the breath of "eternity," and they find above all that Judaism in America is a religion of accommodation, of easy convenience, that it asks the very minimum of its adherents and refuses to come to grips with man's basic anxieties.

The younger thinkers and writers have turned to religion either out of the realization that here is an area of culture and experience which has been central in Jewish history, or because they have been shaken by the crisis of our day, by the bafflement of man in the presence of demonic forces with which he does not seem to be able to cope, and are seeking in religion an explanation and illumination of men's nature and destiny. And with those who cannot forget Auschwitz and Treblinka, the quest is also a cry from the depths of their being—*de profundis.*

So the question is being asked: Can Judaism speak today? Can Judaism, as found in synagogue and temple, talk to a generation that is relatively indifferent to the traditional pieties of Jewish life, and yet is profoundly stirred by the stupendous crisis that our civilization has been undergoing? Can Judaism speak to a generation of Jews in *this* land and in *this* crisis of those things that are both "of time and of eternity"?

WHERE shall the young Jew go? There is, of course, Jewish Orthodoxy, at first glance hardly a too comfortable religion, with its six hundred and thirteen commandments and injunctions. In Eastern Europe these prescriptions constituted a mode of living, an intellectual and moral discipline, and were integral to and inseparable from the "normal" processes of both individual and collective Jewish life. Indeed, the very term "Orthodoxy"—suggesting as it does a special set of beliefs *about* religion—is utterly inappropriate as applied to our ancestors in Eastern and Central Europe. It is, however, appropriate in America, where that totality of experience has been disrupted. Here Orthodoxy is but one variant of Jewish belief and attitude, and it can be an "easy" religion in the sense that it offers a precise regimen for living, but no longer a grand and speculative vision of man's nature and destiny. It is a fact of some significance that nothing has come out of Orthodox Judaism to light up the tragedy of these last decades—no cry at least faintly resembling that of the exilic

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THE present revival of Jewish religious thinking has evoked considerable interest—often, however, tinged with perplexity, for many of the voices speak with religious accents rather unfamiliar to American Jewish thought: there is a novel stress on the supernatural as against the natural, and the religious as against the ethical. ISRAEL KNOX here attempts to reassert the naturalistic and ethical bases of the Jewish religion, and to answer some recent criticisms of this approach. He is assistant professor in philosophy at Ohio University and has written widely on Jewish subjects. He has contributed to previous issues of COMMENTARY, as well as to many other general and scholarly publications, and is the author of a book, *The Aesthetic Theories of Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer.* Mr. Knox came to this country from Russia as a child, and studied at the City College of New York and Columbia University, where he received his doctorate in 1936.

prophet's "comfort ye, comfort ye my people," or even the mild and compassionate complaint of Rabbi Levi Isaac of Berditchev, addressed to God: "Why are you inflicting so much agony upon your people?" What chiefly can be observed is an increase in the membership of Mizrachi, the religious-Orthodox wing of Zionism.

Reform Judaism, on its part, impresses many, Jews and non-Jews alike, as a very "sensible" religion. Its emphasis upon ethical monotheism, and its corresponding lack of emphasis upon the supernatural, have been salutary. Its failure, however, to impose any concrete obligations, to go beyond vague moral pronouncements, has rendered it an "easy" religion too, and has transformed its temples into lecture-halls and its services into social gatherings. There is nothing wrong with Reform rabbis participating in the extra-religious activities of the community, but one suspects that many have turned to Zionism or to movements of social reform, not as a consequence of religious conviction permeating all phases of life, but rather because of Reform Judaism's remoteness from, and lack of inner commitment on, deeply religious issues.

Conservative Judaism has made a serious attempt to separate the wheat from the chaff, to preserve the core of traditional Judaism without its encumbrances, to put Israel's ancient heritage in a contemporary perspective. Conservative Judaism is today very much to the fore and if Judaism in America is to endure, in all likelihood it will take much of its character from the Conservative version. Conservative Judaism has, however, not yet reached the heart of the matter; in practice, it represents a working compromise between Orthodox and Reform rather than a distinctive and carefully considered interpretation, and what it has of a philosophy is improvised and superficial. The relevance of Judaism must not be dissociated from its social ethos, but if it is to be the relevance of a *religion*, its categories cannot be subservient to the categories of sociology; they must be primary, fundamental, and essential. Nor can they be entirely derived from the categories of the Jewish people's history or of Zionist nationalism. And these seem to be Conservative Judaism's dominant moods.

One may disagree with Reconstructionism, but no one who is aware of Judaism's predicament in our day can afford to neglect it. Unlike Orthodox, Conservative, or Reform Judaism, it is "trans-denominational" and has a point-of-view. Reconstructionists, and notably Dr. Mordecai Kaplan, have done a good deal of thinking on religion in terms of theology, culture, and as a human experience; they have examined Jewish religious tradition and values in terms of Jewish peoplehood, existence in a "non-Jewish" environment, historic continuity; and Dr. Kaplan has written a solid book on the future of the Jew in America. It is to the credit of Reconstructionism that it does not engage in the "retreat from reason" which is now customary. To be rational, however, should not mean to be unimaginative; and to refuse, as Reconstructionism does, to take symbols, metaphors, and myths literally, should not at all imply that they are not to be taken seriously: poetry and myth are near the heart of religion. In its revision of some cherished traditions, in discarding symbols and metaphors whose meanings are multi-dimensional in favor of a less complicated language, Reconstructionism has made religious belief and expression somewhat tepid; and in its altered prayer-book and Haggadah it has substituted only too often rhetoric for poetry. Its conception of the Jews as a "peoplehood," though not free from pitfalls, is fruitful, and its positive attitude toward the Galut is wholesome, but its linkage of peoplehood with political nationalism (Zionism) is too close and its theory of "two civilizations" lacks as yet clarity and precision.

It is easier, however, to point out the shortcomings of American Judaism than it is to say what should be done. And it is all too tempting to ignore the historic circumstances in which American Judaism has been wrought. In any case, criticism of Judaism, past and present, should always be within the basic premises of Judaism itself. It will not do to impose upon Judaism a "frame of reference" which is alien to its very nature and which, if accepted, would transform it into something other than itself.

Unhappily, a careful scrutiny of the criticism of American Judaism, as it shapes itself in the views of the younger thinkers and writers, discloses that much of it is the result of just such a misunderstanding. There is cause for dissatisfaction with present-day Judaism, and there is nothing insidious or destructive about such dissatisfaction. But if it is to be truly meaningful and if it is to lead to earnest thinking among those who care deeply about it, then it must involve an examination of *Judaism*—an examination of its fundamental and distinctive content, and perhaps a tracing of the historic development of that content—and *not* of something else.

The climate of free discussion will not hurt Judaism, and criticism, even if it be misdirected and confused, can serve a good end. And yet the time has come when a criticism of such criticism is necessary. It is clear, and even admitted, that much of the criticism of contemporary Judaism derives from the tenets of Protestant "crisis theology." As such, is it not a criticism of Judaism outside its own assumptions (Judaism has hardly any formal theology at all, and what it has can be confined almost wholly to the *Shema*: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One"), and in actuality is it not a demand that Judaism cease being what it is and become something else? Such criticism is not so much "destructive" as it is irrelevant. It would seem to indicate a failure to perceive the essential character of Judaism and its immense insights into the meaning of human history and into the nature and destiny of man.

II

ISRAEL is a people *in history,* and has its origin in a sort of voluntary covenant* —or, more accurately, a series of covenants, from Abraham to Moses, from tribal henotheism to universalist monotheism, with the covenant of Sinai the decisive one. It is not at all important to ascertain the exact details of this origin or even to prove its historical authenticity. What is important is the undeniable fact that the religion of Israel assumed the validity of this original experience, accepted its ethical and spiritual implications, and built its edifice upon it as a base.

Israel's holidays, millennial as they are, nonetheless are always new, because they celebrate a perennial act of liberation, a renewal of the covenant. The original act of liberation was from an old and decadent civilization, whose governing conviction—we are told by Professor Frankfort in his recent book, *Ancient Egyptian Religion*—was the certainty that "the universe is essentially static." Jewish "destiny" was in the future, and the Jews came to believe that the universe was not static, that there was *movement* in history. From this it followed that such movement was *history,* and that history was *progress,* that is, movement toward the "end of days," a golden era located in the future and not, as with the Greeks, in the past.

The "metaphysics" of Judaism—its conception of human destiny, of the relationship between man and God, of good and evil, of life and death—cannot be considered apart from the recognition that it is *a religion in history*. The religion of the Jews grew directly and continuously out of their historic experiences. The experience at Sinai, as reported in the Bible, was a momentous one because it conferred "peoplehood," the sense of a common purpose and shared destiny, upon the "children of Israel," the descendants of Jacob. In a sense, the beginning of Jewish peoplehood is rooted in a free association, made durable by a common historical memory (as "the sons of Abraham"), and sanctified by a covenant between the members of this "association" and their god, Yahweh.

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*The use of an identical religious vocabulary by religious thinkers who wish to convey different religious meanings is an obvious source of confusion. I do not use the term "covenant" as referring to any specific historical event. My use of it may be compared rather with the role of such a concept as "social contract" in political philosophy. Communities may not actually have been formed by such a contract at some single historic moment, and yet it is a sort of postulate implicit in the modern democratic polity; it is not possible to prove or disprove the theory of the social contract except by one's own political practice. The "covenant," like the "social contract," can only be proved by its being fulfilled. It is similar, one would say, with the word "God." In Jewish religious thought there has been little speculation on the nature of God; and what there has been is marked by an adherence to "negative theology"—we can say what God *is not,* but not what he *is.* The prophets and the sages used the term "God" as a negation of superstition, and as a supreme affirmation of the ideal and holy as *real,* though not necessarily *supernatural.*

The covenant determined the movement of Jewish history, but not because of any specific content. That content was shaped later, and the Decalogue as we know it was written later too. The supreme importance of the covenant lay in the altogether novel realization it exhibited as to the relationship between a people and its god. Hitherto that relationship (to be found also in the "stories" of the founding of Athens and Rome) was one of blood, usually "totemistic," with the people claiming descent from its tribal god. Such a god was bound by physical kinship —consanguinity—to defend his people, and all quarrels between them involved "mercenary" matters (the quantity and quality of sacrifices), or ritualistic propriety. What was not involved was righteousness; that is to say, the whole domain of morality was excluded.

The compact between Israel and its god, Yahweh, was a voluntary "meeting of minds," an agreement between a congregation of men and a god, choosing each other, and promising to abide by a covenant. And, in sum, the terms of this covenant comprised a single commandment: "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy," and therefore "you are to be a people living in righteousness." The notion of a covenant of righteousness was as unique and was to prove as revolutionary as the concept of ethical monotheism.

THE compact between the children of Israel and Yahweh was to be tested in conduct and not merely in creed or dogma, and on receiving the covenant the people proclaimed: "We will do and obey." (It was the undying remembrance of this pledge that prompted the sages of the Talmud to ascribe the following utterance to God: "Would that they had forsaken Me, but observed My commandments!") The covenant was to take on meaning and to be invested with content in the light of Jewish experience.

As Jews "adapted" themselves to the ways of the surrounding states (otherwise they could not build a state at all), the earlier, "non-literary" prophets came to warn and to remind them of their compact with Yahweh. This warning and this reminder, too, served to widen and deepen Jewish experience. The struggle against Baalism, waged by Elijah and others, grew out of the conviction that Yahweh was not a nature-god, a locality-god, like the Baals, imprisoned in a precinct, but a "mobile" god, a time-god, wedded to a people (a god who had already told Jacob: "I will go down with thee into Egypt"). Yahweh was to be more than a fertility-god, though that also was within his power; he was to become a God of righteousness. The Jews were still henotheists, that is, they admitted the existence of other gods besides their own, but they nonetheless liberated their god from bondage to a locality, and, after Elijah, the right of Yahweh to supremacy among the Jews was never doubted, though the danger of his Baal-ization was not wholly averted.

It would be an exaggeration to set up a perfect correspondence between the historic experiences of the Jews and the advanced ideas of the prophets. But to deny any correspondence at all would be equally false. Out of their servitude in Egypt, out of their contact with a stratified social and economic structure, and out of a dim memory of their common descent as "the sons of Abraham," came the grand Mosaic conception of a free, collective covenant between the Israelites—all of them—and Yahweh: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

The attitude toward Moses revealed in

Jewish tradition is truly remarkable. Regarded as the greatest of the prophets, he was refused supernatural status, and was referred to as "the man Moses"; no attempt was made to deify him, and his failings as a human being were emphasized. As the Biblical tale has it, Moses died in the wilderness, and no one knows where he is buried. He did not enter the promised land. Is it far-fetched to assume that the writers of the tale—men of the prophetic tradition—did not wish to identify Moses, the giver of the law, with a land, promised or plain, and were implying, in effect, that Israel's "land" was the law of God, the law of righteousness, that Israel was a people at once in time and eternity, "with the whole world as its stage"? (Several millennia later Rabbi Levi Isaac of Berditchev was to reaffirm this in his own touching way: "The Russians bow to an emperor, the Germans and the English boast of their kingdoms, but I, Levi Isaac, son of Sarah of Berditchev, say: 'Glorified and sanctified be His great name.'")

IT WAS only after Elijah's victory over the priests of Baal—over the priests of a fertility-cult—that the way was clear for the prophets of the 8th century BCE and the great Deuteronomic reforms of the 7th century.

Not long before Elijah's time the nation had been divided into two kingdoms, and the later prophets were stirred by this critical historical experience and learned from it a sublime lesson. There were now two kingdoms, and yet Yahweh was the god of both lands and of the people dwelling within them. It is quite possible that this simple situation assumed for the prophets a tremendous significance and led them to reason that if Yahweh could be the god of more than one kingdom he could also be the god of more than one people. It was a magnificent thought and a daring one, and from that moment on henotheism was doomed and Yahweh was destined to become God. Amos, a native of Judea and preaching in Israel, the Northern Kingdom, was possessed with this vision as no other in his day.

The process of transforming Yahweh into God required several additional centuries and was consummated in the teachings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and deutero-Isaiah (the unknown prophet of the Babylonian Exile). The tragic and turbulent experiences of the Jews constituted the soil upon which these teachings took root. The Northern Kingdom was conquered and its people submerged, and then Judea suffered defeat. Out of this anguish came the prophet's comforting assurance.

Israel was undergoing a mighty trial, and not a mere punishment; Israel was *the suffering servant of the Lord,* the bearer of a universal message and a "light of the nations, that my salvation may be unto the ends of the earth."

That assurance was never forgotten. Even as the "hedge" was being built around the Law, the authors of the Psalms, of the tales of Ruth and Jonah, were restating this universal affirmation on another level and in another mode. There were times, however, when it seemed that the message of Israel would be subordinated to a purely nationalist ideology. But it was not Ezra's "hedge," nor the "laws" of the rabbis and sages, that threatened to accomplish this. For Ezra's "fence" was a spiritual one, erected to keep the light burning, to hold vigil over it, lest it be extinguished by heathen practices.

It was the political nationalism of the Maccabean period which subordinated this universal affirmation to the compulsions of a state, put God in the service of a land and a dynasty (thus "justifying" aggression against other lands and the conversion, at the point of the sword, of the Idumeans to Judaism), and led to the temporary shrinkage of the prophetic idea. But temporary it was (the books of the Maccabees were not included in the Biblical canon), and the enterprise of the prophets—the liberation of Yahweh from the role of a locality-god and his transformation into the God of all the peoples of the world with Israel as "a light of the nations"—could not be undone.

In rabbinic Judaism Israel still remained "the suffering servant of the Lord" and God remained the God of all the peoples. It was the "light" that mattered, and for its sake Yohanan ben Zakkai was willing to leave behind the "earthly" Jerusalem in the midst of a violent war and plead with Vespasian for the preservation of the "light." Rabbinic Judaism, far from being narrow and nationalist, yielded up without much effort the "peasant's" loyalty to land and lord, and endowed the day of mourning in commemoration of Jerusalem's fall with the prophet's universal meaning. The day of mourning, the ninth day of the month of Av, was to be not only a day of lamentation but of hope and faith—of hope that all mankind would be redeemed. The restoration of Israel was to be inseparable from, was to be conditioned upon, the redemption of all the peoples of the earth.

THERE can hardly be any doubt that the prophetic idea – "ethical monotheism" – had its roots in the historic experience of the Jewish community, and that this experience is inextricably intertwined with the evolving sense of that community's moral and religious destiny. The passion of the prophets was for justice, and justice was the core of their religion. Abraham had already challenged his God in peremptory fashion: "Shall not the judge of all the world do justly?" And seven centuries later, Amos proclaimed a doctrine of justice commensurate with his wider view of God, a justice which would now and henceforth include social morality:

I hate, I despise your feasts,
And I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies . . .
But let justice well up as waters,
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Amos did not scoff at "mere morality," nor did Isaiah:

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Both Amos and Isaiah beheld in morality the *content* of religion as opposed to its *form,* whether ritualistic or "metaphysical." Jeremiah summed it up:

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I am a God near at hand, saith the Lord,
And not a God afar off.

According to the prophets, God is involved in the affairs of men and in their destiny, and in the measure in which men practice righteousness is God's might triumphant and his majesty exalted. To Amos and Isaiah, morality was not "peripheral" to religion, and religion was not "morality tinged with emotion"; morality, to them, was the content of religion, and their God was a God of history. After Amos and Isaiah, it was no longer possible, though such attempts were made, to cut religion off from social morality.

III

THE emphasis upon the indivisibility of social morality and religion suggests the "naturalistic" trend of prophetic thinking. Naturalism in our time has come upon its "seven lean years" as the fashions of the day are changing, and the outcry against it has recently been both loud and shrill. Without supernaturalism, so the argument goes, there is no religion and there is no healing of man's tragic tensions. All the ills in the world are supposedly due to the eclipse of supernaturalism in the 19th century (as though the world had had no ills prior to the Enlightenment!).

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The prophets were far-sighted, but not so far-sighted that they gazed beyond the world of nature into another world—one beyond man's reach and outside of society. They were concerned with nature and with the society of men and women within the world of nature. They talked in the name of God and did not bother to define him or to speculate about him. They had no need of definition and speculation because they heard his voice in their own hearts and minds and they saw him all about them, and their awareness of him grew as they became conscious of the wonders and beauty of nature and of the movement of history—human society—toward some reasonable and decent community of men and women.

There is a profound insight in Einstein's comment: "The Jewish God is simply a negation of superstition, an imaginary result of its elimination. . . . It is also clear, that 'serving God' was equated with 'serving the living.' The best of the Jewish people, especially the Prophets and Jesus, contended tirelessly for this." No one can tell exactly how the prophets thought of God and to what degree their images are literal or metaphorical. Perhaps it was just because their approach was "unphilosophical" that they had a conception of God as simply and supremely spiritual and as "regulative" in the affairs of men. God was the one "absolute," to be loved wholly, "with all one's heart, might, and soul," so that men would not be tempted to convert their own little goods and achievements into "absolutes," so that they might remember that they are not God, but only in the image of God, that is, that they are not the whole of reality but only a part of it.

BECAUSE the prophets were this-worldly they invoked the name of God, but did not "exploit" God as a worker of miracles. The "new heaven" and the "new earth" of the prophets were of man's making, under the rule of God, and could be attained by harnessing the energies of nature and society to moral purposes. The ills that the prophets witnessed, the visible corruptions and injustices about them, could not be remedied by miracles (happening here and there, now and then), but demanded hard and consistent effort, deep and sincere conviction.

The one "miracle" the prophets believed in was the ever-present reality of repentance and conversion, and that is why they did not cease exhorting: "Woe unto you, woe unto you!" Already Abraham, in his controversy with God on the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, prolongs his filibuster in the expectancy of such a "miracle"; he is hoping that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will repent and mend their ways. Abraham's hope was in vain, but God apparently was sufficiently "impressed" later to punish Jonah, who was reluctant to go to wicked Nineveh and inform the people of their condemnation (either because he had no faith in the possibility of their repentance or because he feared exactly such repentance and did not want them to be spared).

Neither miracles nor a rigid determinism was acceptable to the prophets, but a creative idealism within the limits (which they knew to be great) of man's moral and spiritual resources. The prophets were grown-up men and therefore could not make their wishes binding upon the universe, but they were not blind men and so could see that the "heart's desires" and the "realities of nature" might meet—if we only did our very best—at some points on "life's horizon."

With the Pharisees and the rabbis, prophetic Judaism underwent considerable modification; recognizable eschatological elements —looking to the dissolution of this world in "the world to come"—were added, and in the 12th century Maimonides includes the belief in the resurrection of the dead as one of his thirteen articles of faith. But asceticism, monasticism, other-worldliness *as such* were never in the mainstream of Jewish thinking. The law was given to a community and it was given for life and not for death. (In the Talmud, God is reported as saying to Moses: "Wherever you find a mark left by the steps of man, there I am before you.") The Torah was to be interpreted in the light of human experience and wisdom. Rabbinic

Judaism is a modification of, but not a break with, prophetic Judaism.

IV

There is yet another side to religion, and it is one whose appeal is strong in an age of crisis. It is both "metaphysical" and "psychological," and is preoccupied with man's enduring tensions in a world not of his making.

There is the awful brevity of man's life—its uncertainty and abortiveness; there is the evil that surrounds it—sickness, old age, the futility of our finest efforts, the death of those dearest to us before our own days are ended. Obviously, these tensions cannot be completely resolved, but men have always strained toward some sort of "explanation," some sort of answer to the perennial question: Why? In periods of crisis the quest gains momentum, and tends either to subordinate the social aspect of religion to the "metaphysical," or else to discard it entirely as "mere" morality.

Awareness of evil as well as of the limited efficacy of human effort is evident in much of the early history of the Jews—their bondage in Egypt and their liberation, the wanderings in the wilderness and the slow arduous conquest of Canaan. And the death of Moses before entering the promised land is as definitive a testimony to man's finitude as can be found in all literature, sacred and secular. Later, the precarious political condition of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the permanent destruction of one and the temporary destruction of the other, surely enhanced this awareness of evil in the world. But here something astonishing occurred. Instead of declaiming in accents of hate and vengefulness, the prophets cried out for justice in the land and for the purification of the heart. Amos had already informed the Jews that they were a "chosen people," but that it was no simple matter to be chosen by God:

You only have I known of all the families of
of the earth;
Therefore I will visit upon you all your
iniquities.

Isaiah reproached them in the name of God:

Children I have reared, and brought up,
And they have rebelled against Me.

And the prophet of the Exile told them in unforgettable words:

For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace,
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
Until her triumph go forth as brightness
And her salvation as a lamp that burneth.

The Exilic prophet was neither bitter nor despondent, and without ignoring the evil that befell his people made it bearable with his vision of the "suffering servant of the Lord."

On their return from Babylonia the Jews may have shown the influence of the cosmological dualism of Zoroastrianism, with its conflict between the principle of Light (good) and Darkness (evil). But the essence of the prophetic tradition remained unimpaired and in the subsequent codes the admonition to deal justly with the "outsider," to "know the heart of the stranger," was preserved. In the stories of Ruth, Jonah, and Job, "strangers" are not treated as scapegoats, but presented with fairness and praise. In the story of Jonah, even the enemies of Israel are held to be capable of repentance (as the scapegoat is not) and are cared for by God, and in Leviticus it is given special sanction: "If a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong. The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God."

It is quite true that there is no sharp division in prophetic thinking between evil as cosmic and as moral, as individual and as social. That is a post-prophetic development and is fundamental with Paul. But it is precisely the stubborn refusal to draw such a division between cosmic evil and human evil that constitutes the spiritual greatness of the prophets.

Yet even a cursory reading of the prophets will reveal that they were men of genuine metaphysical sweep – else how could they have been so God-intoxicated and universalist? Their failure to withdraw from the "market-place" and to find refuge in a "metaphysical theology" did not impoverish their religious ethic, but rather gave it direction as well as meaning. None perceived as clearly as did the prophets that the source of religion was in man's ineffable longing for the infinite, and they would have had no difficulty in understanding the Psalmist's question:

What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou thinkest of
him?

Man's tensions, however, his longing for the infinite, were no reason—as the prophets and the rabbis saw it—for man to evade his social responsibilities. On the contrary:

Righteousness and justice are the foundation
of thy throne;
Mercy and truth go before thee.

Can the "metaphysical" tensions within us be finally resolved? Obviously, they cannot. What we can do at best is to try to give intellectual and emotional expression to them, and if the formulation be a reasonable one and in accordance with the "facts" of experience, that in itself is a kind of assuagement. Indeed, when so formulated, it is more than an assuagement; it can then, in turn, light up these facts of experience and, to a degree, transform them.

PROPHETIC Judaism was not seriously affected by that dualism which splits the dominion of the world between two principles, and then shifts responsibility for the existence of evil to the evil one. Nor could Prophetic and Pharisaic Judaism accept the Pauline version of sin and evil. Paul does not transfer sin to others ("original sin" is our common inheritance), but he does transfer *atonement* and beholds the washing away of such sin in the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God. Prophetic and Pharisaic Judaism could not accept this view without relinquishing its conviction of the inseparability of religion from morality, and its belief that sin can be redeemed through righteousness. The prophetic view is "prospective" and not "retrospective," and looks forward to a Messianic era, a consummation in the future, in the "end of days." Paul moves away from the prophetic linkage of religion and morality, and makes of both a state of mind, a matter of faith; freedom is no longer social and objective, but a function of the spirit, of the inner life. For the rest, there is little to do in history—which is the realm of nature—but to rely upon God's love and forgiveness, which is the realm of supernatural grace.

As related in Genesis, "original sin" is part of the drama of creation and man's groping toward self-recognition. How could the authors, without such a stupendous symbol, render intelligible the human situation? In Genesis, "original sin" is "original" in the sense that it is a component of life itself, of man's life which is finite and fragmentary and lacks wholeness ("dust thou art, to dust returnest"). And it cannot be atoned for vicariously if life is what it is. *Tragedy* is thus one dimension of man's life and *holiness* is another. Man is finite and cannot be equated with all of reality, for then he would be God; but he bears within him the "image of God" and can therefore seek God and serve him and aspire to be God-like. And he can do so by an act of supreme freedom, not as an automaton whose destiny has been decreed without his own intervention: "See" —the writers of Deuteronomy declare in God's name—"I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil. . . . I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore, choose life. . . ."

"Original sin" can thus be diminished as we transcend our finitude, our self-absorption, in the practice of righteousness. And so Isaiah, aware of the terrible contradictions of our human nature, of the good we *want* and the evil we *do,* implores:

Come now, and let us reason together,
Saith the Lord;
Though your sins be as scarlet,
They shall be as white as snow;
Though they be red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.

V

JEWISH history can surely be defined as one of "crisis." Jews have lived for millennia in the "valley of the shadow of death." They have learned how insecure life can be in a world that separates religion from social morality, and then makes of religion a matter of personal salvation, a relation between man and God *outside society.* In their own communities in Eastern Europe Jews clothed religion with the flesh and bone of morality, and appraised and hallowed each detail as a Sanctification of the Name. Such sanctification was coextensive with life itself. The story of the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, with their spiritual discipline, the moral tone and quality of their social living—without the coercion of a state—has yet to be told to a Jewish generation whose self-esteem has been heightened by an exhibition of Jewish physical prowess to a world that respects such prowess alone.

"Naturalists" and "humanists" have described the crisis of our time as due to the vast gap between our technological progress and the social uses of intelligence. The "anti-naturalists" have been seeking the causes of the gap itself, and have described it as exactly what it is—an emptiness, a spiritual vacuum, a chaos in value. The remedy that they prescribe is a firm and fixed set of values, with a supernatural source and guarantee. Only by a transcendent affirmation—so they assert—can man lift himself out of the "realm of history" into the "realm of grace."

It may be conceded that a transcendent affirmation is required as a postulate of social morality even as postulates are required in science (since we have to start somewhere). But though a postulate is beyond proof, it must grow out of experience, must verify itself in consequences, and must conform to reason. The faith of the prophets was naturalistic; it was grounded in "social psychology"—in their discovery that sympathy between man and man is a category of human experience, an "objective" moral fact. With that as a "scientific" basis and with the covenant as a transcendent affirmation, they could then "postulate" the indivisibility of religion and righteousness, and proclaim the Messianic era as the goal of history and the fulfillment of man's destiny as a creature of both time and eternity.

How different from this is Karl Barth's assertion: "We are not the ones to change this evil world into a good world. God has not resigned His lordship over it into our hands. The salvation of the world, which has already been accomplished, was not our work. . . ." Barth's view is thoroughly Pauline and alien to Judaism, and leaves little for man to do between the time of "the salvation of the world, which has already been accomplished" and God's "final judgment"—little to do, that is, except to live by faith in an "evil world" and make "Christian decisions" out of the "perpetual crisis of the soul." But as Reinhold Niebuhr (himself not unsympathetic to "crisis theology") remarks, this is "a too simple and premature escape from the trials . . . duties and tragic choices which are the condition of our common humanity." There is some truth in Kierkegaard's conception of an "infinite qualitative difference" between God's purposes in eternity and man's purposes in history, but in Kierkegaard's elaboration of it, it leads finally to Barth and the unbridgeable chasm between religion and social morality.

THE Messianic dream, the progressive vision of man's destiny, avoids the crudities and shallowness of a one-dimensional, materialistic approach to history as well as the negative effect of Pauline and Barthian pessimism. The prophets knew what lay deepest in men's hearts and understood the truths of the spirit, and can therefore speak to us and for us today. And they knew that what they preached was not beyond man's moral and spiritual power, and that therefore the failure to establish the reign of justice and mercy is to debase God himself. God's purposes in eternity and man's purposes in history meet when man's righteousness and compassion exalt God's presence on earth; and in man's striving toward the creation of a "new heaven" and a "new earth," toward the "not-yet," that meeting is vouchsafed.

Jewish peoplehood began with a covenant and the Jewish "mission" cannot be exhausted until the covenant of peace and righteousness is acclaimed by all humanity. In recognition of this, Jews are wont to read Isaiah and the Book of Jonah on the Day of Atonement, and the rabbis were fond of saying that "if men are united in one covenant, they behold the presence of God."

Indeed, if we are to survive, we must literally obey the behest of Isaiah:

Seek good and not evil,
That ye may live;
. . . Hate evil and love good,
And establish justice in
the gates of the land.

The prophets were well aware of the tragic self-contradictions and ambivalence of man's nature, the while they conferred dignity upon him by declaring him to be created in the "image of God." They knew further, with a piercing clarity, that it is in the medium of social righteousness that man's finitude is transcended and his contradictions resolved. They staked everything on that conviction, and feared nothing more than the ever-present inclination to identify religion, on the one hand, with ritual and ceremony, and, on the other, with sheer faith, mysticism, and "metaphysics."

THIS is the prophetic tradition, and it is not Israel's alone. For then there would be little hope for the world. Proselytizing is not Israel's way. The prophetic tradition is a motif, and it is a light, and it is an aspect of Western civilization. It is in conflict with other aspects of Western civilization, but it has also helped to mold it; and it has always been an influence in Christianity, with its unstable balance of the Jewish element, this-worldly and humanist—and the Hellenic element, other-worldly and transcendental.

The Jews, however, did not "acquire" this tradition; it sprang from their profound experiences as a people. It is unthinkable that they will forego this historic tradition by turning to the Baals of our day, the locality-gods of territorial nationalism, and turn away from the God of Isaiah whose lines they read on the Day of Atonement. Nor will they, on the other hand, forget the words of Hosea, comforting them and assuring them in God's name:

And I will betroth thee unto Me for ever
Yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in justice,
And in loving-kindness, and in compassion.

THE JEWS UNDER TURKEY'S "NEW DEAL"

The Struggle for Democracy is Still Not Won

HAL LEHRMAN

ONE Sunday morning last October, on a street in Istanbul, which ordinarily dozes through every seventh day, the flag of modern Zion broke out officially for the first time under the Turkish sky from the mast of the newly-recognized State of Israel's Consulate. This modest event produced a succession of surprises from which only old Turkish hands, who know that two and two practically never add up to four along the Bosphorus, can make sense.

No less than fifteen thousand of Istanbul's remaining thirty-five thousand Jews went to that street, eyes wet and throats aching with passionate pride, to see the colors of Israel unfurl. Their spontaneous congregation before the Consulate violated Turkish laws against unauthorized assembly and entirely flouted the ban on demonstrations in favor of a foreign power. The Jews came unbidden, unorganized, and unled. By coming they reversed, emphatically and challengingly, the habitual tendency of Jewry in Turkey to ward off the discriminating attentions of the authorities by keeping as inconspicuous as possible. They came, in fact, despite the nervous pleas of community leaders who feared the apparently inevitable displeasure of a Moslem public and a nationalist government.

But nothing happened. The Jews continued for days to wend their way on pilgrimage to the street of the Consulate, and still no stone was thrown, no angry word spoken even in certain coarsely anti-Semitic sections of the Turkish press, no countermeasure taken by a government which formally has always lumped Zionism with anti-Turkism, the darkest crime in its calendar. Instead of interfering, the authorities assigned extra police to shield the demonstrators from clashes with any over-zealous Turkish patriots. The only mildly restrictive action came when a garland was placed by the Israeli Vice-Consul before the monument to Kemal Ataturk, father of the Turkish Republic. Such floral tributes are usually allowed to lie reverently for a few days. This time the flowers were removed the same evening because, from the moment the wreath was set down, the Jews had commenced thronging in an unbroken procession to the Ataturk monument on Istanbul's Taxim Square as if to a hallowed shrine.

These bizarre proceedings are rendered even more curious by the following facts: On the one hand, most of the Jews who risked a broken head, if not their liberty, by saluting the Star of David on soil dominated by the Crescent of Islam have no present intention of going to Israel at all. The bulk of the Turkish exodus to the Holy Land—some thirty-five per cent of the Jewish community—has already departed. On the other hand, the Turkish government, which has consistently regarded its Jewish minority as an alien element and would now probably like nothing better than a total emigration of the problem to Israel, is doing more today to make the Jews feel tolerably at home in

TURKEY, the easternmost recipient of Marshall Plan funds, is the cornerstone of American foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Yet, as compared with its neighbor Greece, very little information on Turkey's qualifications to be included in the democratic camp has been published in the American press. As in so many countries, at so many critical junctures in their development, the situation and future well-being of the Jewish community may well prove the clearest test of the stability and genuineness of the turn to liberalism. Here HAL LEHRMAN reports the facts and charts the omens, some of which he apparently finds ambiguous—and he suggests that our government has an important, even crucial, role to play. Mr. Lehrman was chief of the OWI in Turkey during the last war; just recently, on his return from Israel, he visited Turkey again. Mr. Lehrman's views are his own, and should not, of course, be considered as those of the American Jewish Committee, which sponsors this magazine.

Turkey than at any time since the Republic was founded over a quarter-century ago.

To understand these characteristically Oriental contradictions, it is necessary to examine seemingly irrelevant matters like the Truman Doctrine, the Marshall Plan, and our own Department of State, as well as to glance backward at the history of Turkish Jewry and Turkey.

As long ago as the 16th century the Osmanli Sultans had already earned Mediterranean Jewry's gratitude by sheltering exiled wanderers from Spain and challenging even the Papacy in defense of Jews against the Inquisition. By the time of Gladstone, the "Terrible Turk" had become a convenient monster to scare British babies with, but for Jews of the Ottoman Empire the era was one of high serenity. The nine hundred thousand Jews under the rule of the Sublime Porte—in Asia Minor, Palestine, the Arab Middle East, and a large slice of the Balkans—experienced a reasonably golden age. True, the Turks massacred Armenians. This was not out of religious zeal, however. The Armenian minority nursed nationalist, separatist, anti-Turkish sentiments and yearned for reunion with its kinsmen in Armenian Russia. The Jewish minority, having no such political ambitions and wanting simply to be let alone, remained unmolested and unpersecuted. In fact it enjoyed large religious and communal autonomy, and a remarkable degree of civil equality. Jews thrived in commerce and industry. Some of them even attained high places in Palace councils.

World War I lopped off Turkey's imperial territories. Reduced to Anatolia and a few square miles of Europe, the newly carved republic made the best of it by deciding that the Turkey which remained would at least be for the Turks. A mood of "anti-foreignism" set in which has endured, with ebbs and flows, to the present moment. In part this was a reaction against the foreign economic interests that had exploited the Empire almost like a colony, using the minorities among their local administrators. At the same time, paradoxically, the young state underwent a "Western" revolution that banished the Caliph, the fez, the veil, and the Arabic alphabet. But these were upheavals of customs and institutions, not of the mind.

Though high-sounding pledges proclaimed the equality of all citizens before the law, in practice the non-Moslem minorities (and even the Moslem Arabs) were treated as unwelcome and dubious aliens in the bosom of the revitalized Turkish nation. Distrusted and disliked, the Jews descended into the category of second-class citizens, alongside the Greeks, Armenians, and other unfortunates. They were entirely shut out from politics and from government jobs, a disability that weighed more and more heavily as the so-called People's Republican party—the *only* party in the new "democracy"—tightened its bureaucratic grip on an increasingly nationalized economy. In the limited areas of economic enterprise left to private initiative, the minorities, whose natural facility in trade put them far ahead of the lumbering Turks, had to pay extra tribute in bribes and *baksheesh* to officials. As yet there was no physical maltreatment, but in a multitude of ways the minorities were made to feel that they did not belong.

With the death of the truly great Kemal Ataturk on the eve of World War II and the advent of his lieutenant, Ismet Inönü, the going got much rougher. Previously, minority members had been barred from holding commissions in the Turkish armed forces. No law forbade it, but somehow they always happened to be failed in examinations for officers. With the rising fortunes of Nazi militarism, however, the Turks were encouraged to bear down. Early in the war they inaugurated a special system of "military" service whereby non-Moslems between the ages of twenty-five and forty-five—including doctors, lawyers, and men of affairs—were arbitrarily picked up on the streets and packed off as army privates to build roads, ditches, and latrines. These "conscription" periods lasted as long as eighteen months. Under no circumstances was a Jewish citizen of Turkey considered deserving of the honor or trust of bearing arms in his country's defense. Strictly speaking, this was not anti-Semitic, since the native Christian minorities underwent precisely the same discrimination; it was anti-minorities, a fruit of the steadily blooming national ego.

As the Wehrmacht continued its sweep eastward and westward, the neutral Turks—courted and flattered by Allies and

Axis—concluded that the war was an Allah-sent opportunity to liquidate the minority question once and for all. The cloudy purpose of the military labor battalions had been to undercut the economic position of the minorities by removing their breadwinners from the centers of commerce and sending them with picks and shovels into the interior. In late 1942 the climax came with the infamous capital levy known as the *Varlik Vergisi.* This time the purpose was quite clear: to purge the minorities altogether from the economy and life of Turkey.

The *Varlik* was advertised as a tax on war profits, equally applicable to all Turkish citizens. Yet, though Moslems outnumbered non-Moslems by about seventy to one, non-Moslems paid fifty-seven per cent of the receipts. This was accomplished by taxing each Moslem Turk a fraction of one per cent of his assets and taxing his non-Moslem competitor half, all, or occasionally *twice* the value of *his* assets. Assessments were made by secret committees. These determined *in camera,* on basis of their private undocumented guesses, what each citizen was worth. Payment had to be completed within thirty days. There was no appeal. Armenian clerks who earned one thousand lira (about seven hundred dollars) a year were taxed two thousand lira; wealthier Armenians, Greeks, Jews who had a total capital of, say, fifty thousand lira were assessed anywhere from twenty-five to one hundred thousand lira. In a few instances the actual individual "tax" paid went as high as one million dollars.

I still remember those fantastic days and nights in Istanbul during the Winter of 1942-43 when my non-Moslem friends were selling everything they owned, down to their clothing, to accumulate cash. Gleeful Turkish buyers held out for desperately low bargain prices, which the victims, with the breath of the collector on their necks, had to accept. Non-Moslem stores, offices, and factories were being confiscated by the hundreds for failure to pay. Up and down the main shopping districts, crowds of Turks were bidding for goods auctioned cheaply right off the shelves. Valuable properties were acquired by "one-hundred-percent Turks" for little or nothing. Meanwhile, police were breaking into private homes, ousting the occupants, and carting every chair and kitchen pot away, sealing doors behind them.

In many cases, persons who paid off most but not all of their assessment by selling everything they had were arrested anyway. Around twenty-five hundred of them were deported like common criminals to a place called Ashkale, in barren Eastern Anatolia. There some of Turkey's most distinguished non-Moslem intellectuals and businessmen were made to live in tents on a windswept, snow-covered plateau. They were set to work breaking rocks under conditions which would have evoked the Gestapo's admiration for ingenuity. Although the diplomatic corps and foreign correspondents knew all this, practically nothing leaked into the world press and no substantial protest from any Foreign Office or State Department was ever delivered, as dictatorships and democracies alike were eager to avoid annoying their potential Turkish ally. In due course, thirty-two of the Ashkale deportees died. The rest were released for the sake of appearances just before Ismet Pasha, convinced that Hitler was finished—and that nothing more could be squeezed out of the deportees—journeyed down to Cairo at the end of 1944 to speak for "democratic" Turkey in conference with Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The money extorted from the minorities—126 million dollars—was never restored.

THE lingering memory of this *Varlik* should have been an eloquent prod to Jewish emigration, but no significant departures occurred until Israel was born. During Ataturk's lifetime the Jews had not felt sufficiently menaced by the unfriendly climate to forsake known discriminations at home for unknown terrors abroad. There had been only one case of mass displacement, in 1933, when the Jews of Thrace, in European Turkey, were suddenly ordered out on a few days' notice. It is still not clear whether the idea originated with the local authorities or with the central government, which Ismet then headed as President Ataturk's Prime Minister. At any rate, the order was soon rescinded, but not before the Jewish community in the main Thracian city of Edirne had been reduced from over ten thousand to three thousand by headlong flight.

When the European war broke out, an

undercover *halutz* movement began doing good work in proselytizing for Palestinian emigration and teaching some rudiments of Hebrew, Zionism, and manual labor to young aspirants for the pioneering life. Several hundreds of these managed to reach Palestine illegally or on mandate government certificates. Most of them were absorbed creditably into the kibbutzim. But the British gates of Palestine were only slightly ajar. Moreover, there was no mass enthusiasm. About a hundred middle-aged, middle-class Turkish Jews did take refuge in Palestine as a result of the *Varlik* or out of fear of Nazi invasion. But when the tax-collecting and the Hitlerite danger subsided, most of these came back to Turkey, having failed to find Eldorado or freedom in a land still ruled from London by the Colonial Office. It needed the electric emergence of a free and sovereign State of Israel to galvanize Turkish Jewry.

THE emigration to Israel began in the Summer of 1948 as an experimental trickle organized by certain Turkish Jewish groups with Israeli connections. The purpose was gingerly to test the Ankara government's attitude toward letting its Jewish citizens go and the Tel Aviv government's attitude toward letting them enter. Both governments obliged, the Turkish by granting passports and exit visas with reasonable celerity, the Israeli by admitting the first boatloads into the reception camps with no questions asked. Thereupon the trickle swelled into a flood. By the time I reached Izmir this June, seven thousand of the fourteen thousand Jews in that Mediterranean Turkish city alone had already gone, and at the present writing the total exodus just from Izmir is over nine thousand. Countrywide, it is estimated that, of some eighty-five thousand Jews believed residing in Turkey on the day Israel was proclaimed, no less than thirty thousand have officially and legally emigrated to Israel in the twenty ensuing months—and to this should be added probably one thousand youths who, not having performed their compulsory Turkish military service, had to smuggle themselves out. These, and the much larger number of youths who had already done their Turkish Army stint and emigrated legally, were eager to fight—but for Israel.

There were three other major categories of emigrants: parents following their teenage or grown-up sons and daughters after the latter had established first contacts in Israel; needy, proletarian, small-shopkeeping Jews, who saw no economic future in alien Turkey and regarded Israel as a wondrous world of milk, honey, and job opportunities; the sick and the aged, who yearned to finish out their lives in the long promised and now miraculously achieved Jewish homeland.

The predominant characteristic of this emigration was its poverty. The proof is that today the Turkish Jewish community is almost entirely divested of its lower-class base. The pitiful belongings which the emigrants could not lug with them were dumped for whatever cash they might bring. In Istanbul, near the Galata Tower which overlooks the old Jewish quarter, I found that Karanfil Sokak ["the Street of the Carnation"] had been converted into an impromptu bazaar of second-hand furniture, kitchenware, and odds-and-ends. These were being hawked at prices which, though double what the dealers had paid the emigrants, were still huge bargains. Many emigrants lacked the money to pay their Turkish tax arrears. The taxes had been piling up, unnoticed as long as there was no record of the delinquent's identity in the inefficient Turkish tax rolls, but they had to be settled now that he had emerged from obscurity to register for a passport. Some applicants were even unable to produce the few lira required for passport and visa stamps.

They eked out what they needed by making the rounds of their more prosperous brethren, collecting a bit here and a bit there with the plea that their mission to Israel was a holy one. A system of mass *schnorrerei* developed because organized fund-raising for secular purposes was prohibited by Turkish law.

Moreover, wealthier Jews lacked the habit and taste for large cash donations. Even so, funds of some dimension did get quietly amassed by Zionist groups for the purchase of boat tickets, the financing of the Youth Aliya, and occasionally for emergency relief. In one case, when the Turks temporarily suspended emigration, about four hundred Jews who were destitute after advance payment of their travel expenses were lodged pell-mell in an abandoned coffee house and supported for several months by special community funds.

Conditions of the voyage to Israel were frequently even worse than conditions of the departure. One or two ships chartered by outside Jewish or Israeli agencies made the run to Haifa in fairly sanitary circumstances, but the demand for passage was larger than the space available aboard such vessels. Consequently, all kinds of fly-by-night shipping "companies" arose. A Jewish community leader told me acidly: "With any old tub and enough money to pay for an ad in the papers, you are in the emigration business." If the poorer Jews of Turkey had not been pathetically eager for the Israeli trek anyway, they would have been stampeded into exodus by the promotional zeal of the shipowners. Handbills were dispensed on street-corners and in synagogues, posters were splashed over the walls of Jewish districts, screamer notices were published in a mushrooming forest of Judeo-Spanish newspapers like *Hatikva, Shalom, La Boz de Türkiye,* and even the more sedate French-language journal *L'Étoile du Levant.*

In the beginning, Moslem Turkish ship companies were blocked from this trade by their government, which was reticent about offending the United Nations or the Arabs in actually transporting prospective soldiers to Israel. But the profits were too attractive, and Turkish operators soon received the nod to grab whatever the traffic would bear. By last March, the Turkish government itself was in the business, using the state-owned "Cumhuriyet" and "Etrusc" to carry one thousand passengers at a clip—and charging round-trip rates for the single passage to Haifa, with the excuse that the vessels returned home empty.

The government also gave private Turkish shipping interests a boost against foreign competition. Turkish ships could accept payment in lira, but non-Turkish ships had to be paid in foreign exchange, which the Turkish government made it hard for the emigrants to come by. The government also became zealous about safety at sea on *foreign* vessels, which it ordered to install extra lifesavers, rafts, boats, and other expensive paraphernalia before being certified as suitable carriers. The government's own ships were seaworthy enough. So were some of the larger privately-owned Turkish cargo boats converted to passenger use. But none of this solicitude was applied to fishing-boats, trawlers, motor yachts, coaling-ships, and other nondescript craft, which slick Turkish operators recruited for the Israel trade.

As more and more of these vessels moved in, competition forced the rates of passage down from a level of three hundred lira in a few months to as low as thirty lira. Along with the sagging tariff, standards of safety, navigation, and common humanity also declined, from a norm which had been indecent even at the start. Ships were filthy, dangerously overcrowded, and manned by skippers and crews whose ethics were too often reminiscent of the Barbary corsairs. The owners' alibi was that they were carrying "refugees" rather than "passengers"; hence the accommodations need not be of a quality usually required for the latter.

The price of the ticket usually did not cover food. It happened more than once that masters deliberately sailed around and around in mid-voyage until the provisions taken aboard by the travelers had been eaten up, after which it was easy to sell them food from the ship's own stores at ransom prices. One boat (certified for one hundred passengers but carrying four hundred) was so expertly guided by a Turkish captain that he sailed it right into an Arab port and was just about to drop anchor when a Jewish passenger noticed that the place did not look at all like Haifa. Some captains practiced the artful dodge, if they encountered rough weather, of offering to toss overboard the luggage in order to lighten the load unless the seasick, terrorized passengers paid an extra fee as premium for "endangering" the vessel and crew.

On land, meanwhile, the Turkish authorities were also not averse to deriving whatever advantages could be squeezed out of the situation. Emigration seemed to be an unkind act toward that section of Islam which was at war with the Jews, but the Turks' conscience hurdled this affront to their Arab coreligionists by the device of marking the passports of all departing Jews: "Not valid for Palestine." Under this fiction, the Jews were presumably bound for France or Timbuctoo, obviously no concern of the Arabs. At the same time the Jews received only tourist visas, not emigrant visas. This was not intended merely to comfort the Arabs. It also enabled the Turks to prohibit the Jews from taking away more than a minimal fraction of their property. If you are going as a "tourist," the argument ran, you'll only be gone a short time, so what do you need to take all your money and goods for? This logic precipitated some curious scenes at the embarkation docks. I heard one Turkish customs inspector forbid an emigrant to go aboard with a carpet and a blanket because "they are too fancy and you won't need them in the hotels where you'll be stopping." The same reasoning put an embargo on factory equipment, on the tools of artisans and craftsmen, and even on ordinary household sewing machines. The ban even included religious objects. It being unlawful to export rolled parchment manuscripts, the rabbi of an Izmir synagogue bewailed to me the prospect of having to leave behind the community's priceless collection of 16th-century rabbinical treatises. He was also selling the silver crowns and belled standards of two Sefer Torahs for the cash value of the metal and he was sewing the holy scroll together in book form, since books at least were permissible for export.

As for exportable money, the official limit was a sum which might keep a person barely alive in Israel for perhaps two weeks. By greasing a palm, of course, it was often possible to get aboard ship with much more. Besides, the current European arts of financial legerdemain have devised entirely invisible ways of sending money out of any country, and certainly more imaginative ways than stowing dollar bills in the hollow bottom of a trunk. Nevertheless the inspectors searched each piece of luggage as if the emigrant was suspected of having lined it with crown jewels. Once in a while someone did get caught—which meant confiscation and imprisonment. There is the cruelly comical story of the old Istanbul Jew who instructed his wife to hide away a pile of gold coins in the baggage and not tell him where, because he talked too much and might blab it. The elderly couple got safely through the customs. Once aboard, the jubilant old man offered one of his wife's freshly baked cookies to the inspector as a farewell gift. The Turk bit into the goody—and broke a tooth on a gold coin.

ORDINARILY, however, few emigrants had gold or anything else to conceal. One of the chief troubles with the Turkish exodus, in fact, was that it poured into Israel, at a time of military and economic crisis a large number of persons who lacked the material resources or physical stamina to be a benefit instead of a burden to the imperilled new state. The uncontrolled nature of the migration made statistics vague, but it is safe to say that less than half of the emigrants were able-bodied persons of a proper age or economic status for effective help to Israel's manpower or capital wealth. The rest were either indigents, for whom work would have to be found by a harassed Israeli administration, or old men, old women, children, and the sick.

Boatload after boatload of such people kept sailing into Haifa harbor without Israeli visas and without previous warning. The new state did what it could to shelter them. But the reality of Israel fell short of the dream. Inevitably, word began to filter back from disgruntled emigrants about the barracks and tents of the transit camps, the shortage of work and housing, the confusion, the indifference and the misery. These reports shocked the community leaders in Turkey. From shock it was a short step to questioning the desirability of further emigration. Over this issue an argument flared which soon assumed all the venom and bitterness of an Oriental feud.

Essentially, the dispute was able to exist and grow because of the odd vacuum created by Turkish law. Neither the Jewish Agency, which supervised the movement to Israel from all parts of the world, nor the Joint Distribution Committee, which financed it, was permitted representation in Turkey. The law prohibited on Turkish soil any organization which had headquarters or received directives from abroad. This stopped the open operation of any Turkish Jewish agency for emigration. Now it is true that, although the Ankara government formally was opposed to Zionist propaganda or activity, it customarily shut an eye to the covert attempts in every Jewish community to organize and abet the emigration. But the impossibility of frank and unconcealed representation blocked effective liaison. There was no chain of command between Tel Aviv and Istanbul. The sending of official communications to Israel, even if veiled in private language, incurred risks of personal danger and reprisal. For practical purposes, the Turkish groups involved in emigration were incommunicado.

The result was uncertainty, corrosive rivalry between groups, and a futile search for a sound policy. What did Israel want? Did she want the emigration to be suspended, or didn't she? Should money collected within the community be spent to embark people who would only clog the refugee centers of embattled Eretz? Or should all those who were physically able to go do so before it was too late to leave? Everybody agreed that eventually whoever wished to settle in Israel should be encouraged and aided. But should this be done now or later, when Israel was better equipped to receive and absorb the influx? On this the divergence was complete and passionate.

One group demanded medical examinations for all candidates and a rigorous selection of only the fittest. Another charged that money had been promised from the community fund, to pay for the chartering of ships, and had then been withheld. Each faction accused the other of treachery to Zion. The Jewish *Étoile du Levant* even suggested that a precipitate exodus was unjust and ungrateful to Turkey for "her tolerance and generosity." Every group professed to have received endorsement of its position from some official source in Tel Aviv, but nobody's evidence to that effect could convince anyone else.

Meanwhile the Jews were a prey to every unfounded report and wild rumor. Two hours after I set foot on Turkish ground at Izmir, the whole community was agog with news that an Israeli mission, headed by "an American who says he's a journalist," had arrived to encourage the exodus (or discourage it, depending on which faction was spreading the rumor). In Istanbul two weeks later, despite my constant denials, the story ran that this reporter was collecting testimony from all disputants in order to make a definitive policy recommendation to Tel Aviv.

Tel Aviv indeed could have avoided this waste of emotion and energy if it could have made up its own mind and then dispatched a secret emissary with sound credentials and clear instructions. All parties would have gladly followed orders. Each was trying to do the right thing, according to its own lights, in total darkness. Fortunately, this situation no longer exists, Turkey having since then permitted an Israeli representative to come in and take direct command of the emigration. But a year earlier, this permission would have enabled the Israeli government to issue visas and control the size and quality of the emigration at will, and a great deal of confusion could have been avoided.

It must be conceded that through all this period Ankara displayed extraordinary benevolence short of openly promoting the exodus. Turkey is, after all, a Moslem country. For a time, in response to the Arabs' protests that Turkey was sending Jews to make war on them, the Turks virtually halted emigration by insisting that the "tourists" actually obtain visas from the countries of their supposed destination. But this lasted only two months, after which emigration was not only tolerated again but even facilitated by the availability of Turkish state-owned ships. Last March, Turkey became the first Moslem government to recognize Israel de facto. In August, Turkey again took a bold step by allowing an Israeli immigration officer to enter the country. In October she permitted an Israeli Consulate to open—and in November she came full circle by naming a minister to Israel and accepting the Israeli nomination of a minister to Turkey.

Why this notable liberalism of the Turks, who traditionally play both ends of the diplomatic board against the middle and bet on nothing except a sure thing? Was it because Israel's performance against the Arabs convinced the Turks that Israel really was "a sure thing"? This certainly was part of the reason, the present regime in Ankara having always hastened to get on the side of a winner. But there is more to Turkish policy than that.

There is, to begin with, the Turkish attitude toward the Arabs. "Is it true that Turks detest Arabs?" I once asked a Turkish diplomat. "The Arabs," he replied scornfully, "were colonial subjects of our Ottoman Empire, so they're not worth detesting. We merely despise them." Then he reflected for a moment, and added: "No, we really don't do that either. I suppose we just ignore them."

With such sentiments, Turkey is not disposed to reckon on the Arabs as pillars of strength in the Mediterranean, an area where she considers her interests vital. Privately, she has always deplored the Arab League as a blundering creation by her British ally of a weak reed to prop up a faltering imperial position in the Middle East. She shows a similar lack of enthusiasm for current exploratory effects to build a Pan-Islamic union extending as far eastward as Pakistan. Though she voted against Palestine's partition in the UN, she did so to satisfy the British, not the Arabs. Very early in the Arab-Jewish war she recognized the potential importance of a strong Israel to Mediterranean stability. She insisted on membership in the Palestine Conciliation Commission where, with the United States and France, she hoped to mediate an Arab-Israeli settlement to her liking. She voted *against* the UN's recent decision to internationalize Jerusalem. In addition she has been looking for economic advantages, and development of a market in which she already holds fourth place among world exporters to Israel.

But there is another reason for Turkey's having outdistanced all other Moslem states in cordiality toward Israel. Though not immediately apparent, the reason is compelling and perhaps dominant. Turkey today, willy-nilly, is on the side of the democracies. She is entirely dependent on the Truman doctrine for her security against Soviet diplomatic pressure, on American war materiel and equipment for her security against Soviet military aggression, and on the Marshall Plan for her security against the Soviet economic cold war. From time to time she feels called upon to give some token of her own democratic virtue in exchange for all this. Turkish recognition of Israel, a gracious but inexpensive act, was one such token – calculated, rightly or wrongly, to please and impress the Americans.

This motive also explains the progress which Turkey has made in *internal* "democratization" ever since she decided, in the last months of World War II, that fascism was not going to win. From a police state in which a single party ruled without possibility of dissent, she has transformed herself into a "liberal" regime where at least the exterior appurtenances of freedom are visible in an unmuzzled press, a vocal parliamentary opposition, and a partial limiting of police rule by due process of law. The police control and the capacity of the government party for the use of force are still there but, being no longer appropriate in a Turkey linked to the Western democracies, they are kept under discreet wraps.

Turkish Jewry has also benefited from the sudden fashionableness of democracy. It will be recalled that the *Varlik* deportees were liberated from their stony exile as a first evidence of Turkey's anti-fascist earnestness even before the war's end. Some of the levy's victims never recovered economically, but others, beginning from scratch, made sensational comebacks. In this they were aided by their own superior competitive skills, by the easy money lying around for everybody in the early postwar years, and, it should be acknowledged, by a decline of the previous discriminations against them. Socially, too, the Jews improved their fortunes. Today an elected Jewish deputy sits in the Turkish Parliament and in the Executive Committee of the opposition Democratic party. A Turkish Jew is a professor at Istanbul University, and two Jews are assistants there. In 1946 Jews and members of the other minorities began getting into reserve-officer training schools—but were systematically kept out of radar, anti-aircraft, and other special army sections where their "foreignism" was still suspect. These lingering restrictions have now been removed. For the first time since the Ottomans, minority schools have been authorized to give religious instruction; in the case of the Jews, this will stimulate the teaching of Hebrew and general Judaic culture. Every minority school used to be saddled with a government-appointed "assistant principal," invariably a Moslem Turk, whose sole function was to spy on and control the school's affairs. This post has now been abolished. Finally, minority religious communities have for the first time received the right to administer in their own name the properties of their own institutions. Because the communities had not enjoyed any legal status, they had previously been unable to control their holdings fully or take corporate actions such as collecting funds, electing officers, or even keeping communal statistics. It is expected that the new situation will greatly facilitate and encourage communal activities of all kinds.

At first glance, these new-found partial freedoms seem ironically useless. Recalling the epidemic of departures provoked by the creation of Israel, one would be justified in concluding that Turkey's tolerance is blossoming too late to compete with the attractions of a completely free Jewish homeland. Turkish Jewry, if surface evidence were all, seems destined to vanish into Israel. In consequence of the mass emigration, certain synagogues are on the verge of closing; Jewish residential districts have shrunk; Jewish firms have sustained crippling losses of skilled Jewish personnel; student registration has slumped so markedly that some Jewish schools may have to economize by merging. Even after the establishment of the Israeli emigration office's controls, forty-five hundred more Jews left for Israel in the three subsequent months.

Parents will continue to follow after their children into the land of Israel. One by one the old Sephardic families, even the most venerable and the richest, will shut their doors and depart, leaving Turkey as void of Jews as antique Yemen. This is the prediction of some.

But I do not believe it. Isolated remnants of Jewish communities in the hinterland—Edirne, Urfa, Tekirdag, Gazi Aintap—may disappear. Izmir, Ankara, Bursa, Adana, and Mersine may dwindle to insignificance. But in Istanbul such a total decline is most unlikely. And it is Istanbul which counts—if Turkish Jewry is to have any future history.

That city has always contained the bulk of Jewish affluence and culture in Turkey. Despite the efforts of Kemal Ataturk and his successor to build up Ankara as a rival, Istanbul is still the commercial and cultural hub of the Turkish Republic, its window on the Western world. Even if the drain from Israel should reduce Istanbul Jewry to less than half its pre-Israel fifty thousand, the remainder would still suffice to constitute a thriving and important outpost on the highway between Europe and Asia.

As indicated earlier, the Turkish emigration to Israel involved the lower economic level of Jews almost exclusively. Why has the middle class not been affected? First, because Zionism has never been, and is not today, strongly rooted in the emotional and intellectual awareness of Turkish Jewry. Even the poorer elements of the population went to Israel less out of Zionist patriotism than in the hope of bettering their economic and social status. The culture of the middle class rests on French, not Hebrew; its outlook is European, not Middle Eastern. Unlike its brethren in the lands of sharper persecution, Turkish Jewry has not sought the usual sublimation through the intense political action offered by Zionism or liberal-radical movements. Instead it has avoided political agitations altogether, burying itself in inconspicuousness with a view to winning security from Moslem resentments. This may not be a particularly leonine attitude, but it is nevertheless a fact. At the same time, however, the Jews of Turkey have remained essentially and clannishly Jewish, except for the so-called Donmehs, a small group which embraced Islam three centuries ago. The demonstrations before the Israeli Consulate were not a testimony of allegiance to Zion, but they *were* a testimony of pride and exaltation in the achievements of fellow-Jews.

Already lacking a sense of physical identification with Israel, Turkish Jews have not been encouraged to acquire it by the unfavorable reports which have come back. The middle class in particular has been unable to work up any enthusiasm, on the available evidence, for transplanting its talents in trade, commerce, and investment to an area which is untried and hazardous. Even those who might be willing to take the plunge are deterred by the mechanical difficulties and perils of liquidating their holdings at a fair price and safely transferring their assets out of the country without attracting official attentions. Finally, there is the strong and natural attachment which the Jews of Turkey feel for the land of their birth, whatever its previous injustices and present uncertainties. I drove with a friend late one June afternoon along the magic shore of the Bosphorus. Merry little sailing-boats bounced upon the waters; on the Asiatic side red and white villas nestled like precious stones in the warm green of fields and woods; the domed mosques and the minarets glanced back their golden rays toward the setting sun. My friend looked at the scene as any American Jew would look upon a familiar and beloved American landscape. We had been talking about Israel, and tears were in his eyes as he turned to me and said: "But *this* is my country, my home."

THERE are many Jews in Turkey like my friend, thirty to forty thousand of them, and possibly more. Some, but not all, of their sons may yet go to Israel, Western Europe, or the United States; they themselves will remain in Turkey. Barring some great disaster, therefore, it seems that a Jewish community will endure in Turkey for an indefinite time to come.

It is not necessary to pass judgment here or attempt to prove that a stubborn survival of Jewry in Turkey is either wise or foolish. The point is that such a survival appears at this moment to be likely. If so, the Jewish community in Turkey is entitled to the best possible climate of tolerance. Despite the flurry of democracy in present-day Turkey, such a climate is far from solidly established. Its progress will be in exact ratio to the genuine liberalization of the Turkish state. This in turn will depend directly on the magnitude and effectiveness of westernizing influences in Turkey.

In particular, it will depend on the United States. An American effort to obtain a better brand of democracy in Turkey would help to safeguard the United States' military, political, economic, and moral investment there. Such an effort would also automatically achieve, as a valuable by-product, the greater security and tranquillity of all Turkish minorities, including Jews, and a greater potential minority influence for good on Turkish democracy as well as on Turkey's relations with Israel. That the United States is in a position to ask for more convincing tokens of democracy than Turkey has thus far displayed is clear to anyone who has visited that country since it began receiving American aid under the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

The new Turkish liberalism is as yet not a wholehearted reform of the single-party wartime dictatorship. It seems rather a political device to placate the Americans, whom the regime in Ankara needs for its continued existence. The improvements, though dazzling by contrast with previous conditions, have for the most part been in the direction of creating the impression of democratic conversion, and little more. It is an open secret that the government extensively revised the results of the 1946 general elections before announcing the final vote-count. As the 1950 elections approach, signs multiply that the People's Republican party may again apply sleight-of-hand at the ballot box, especially since wide unrest in the past four years has immeasurably increased the Opposition's chances of unsaddling the government in a fair test.

A long-promised electoral law to correct abuses at the polls is taking an unconscionable time to get written. Opposition warnings that another electoral fraud will not be tolerated have been officially denounced as a summons to rebellion, the government ominously declaring its readiness "to maintain order." An attempt to use an Opposition "plot" on President Inönü's life as an excuse to clamp down on key anti-régime politicians, has had to be abandoned because it was too flimsy even for the government to pretend to believe. A bill railroaded through Parliament gives enlarged powers to the *valis* (provincial governors), the same party henchmen whose intimidation of voters and whose arithmetical dexterity contributed so much to the government's electoral success last time. Increased controls on press freedom and "extremist" opinions are other straws in the wind.

It should not be supposed that all the Opposition groups are automatically liberal. The Nation party, led by a disgruntled ex-army commander and packed with aged enemies of Kemal Ataturk's early reforms, is a throwback to the days of the Caliphate. Already equipped with a blatantly anti-Semitic press, it would like to see Islam restored to its ancient sway, presumably along with the harem. If this group should ever come to power, it would rapidly outdistance the present regime in reaction.

But there is another group, the Democratic party, which is far more likely to do well in an honest election. It is the closest approach in Turkey to a moderate, progressive movement in the Western sense. It is the group in which Turkish Jewry largely places its hopes. It advocates a liberal economy, as against the present widespread system of "state" ownership which has benefited the government's incumbents at the cost of the country. It wants to take Turkey's excellent Constitution, still as good as the day Kemal Ataturk first wrote it, and put it at last into effect.

A free choice at the polls in a country as politically backward as Turkey always involves certain dangers, but the time to risk them would seem to be now. If the extreme right-wing should win at the expense of the government and the liberals, excesses of the new regime might still be curbed through fear of disapproval from Turkey's Western friends. If, as is more probable, the Democrats should win a majority or at least a balance-of-power position, they may set their people squarely on the path toward becoming a democracy in fact as well as in name. Turkey would thereby be transformed into a more palatable and dependable ally of the West and a surer guarantor of the rights of man, including those of the minorities.

A second, and perhaps even broader, avenue along which Turkey can be guided toward reform is one which will bring her economy closer to Western models. Today her economic structure is ridden by a political oligarchy which shuts out not only foreign investment but also domestic private initiative, to say nothing of efficiency. Turkey needs to be opened to foreign know-how and native enterprise. This does not mean a reinstatement of the system of foreign "capitulations" which bled Ottoman Turkey to the bone, nor an unrestricted, dog-eat-dog capitalist anarchy. It does mean the adoption of Western production-management techniques. It means a relaxation of the single-party state "socialism" which makes a burlesque of socialism by loading it with all the vices of bureaucracy and the spoils system without producing any of the virtues of the "welfare state."

Here again the real interests of the United States, the Turkish people, and the Turkish minorities converge. The Marshall Plan must fail in its drive to increase Turkey's contribution to European economy unless the Turkish economy is first brought nearer the European level by adoption of Western methods and ideas. The Turkish masses cannot achieve better than their present dismal standard of living and primitive way of life unless their productivity is increased through Western machinery on farm and in factory. As for the minorities, the more Turkey grows cosmopolitan through the introduction of Western faces the less chauvinistic she will become and therefore the less prone to insist on discriminations between Moslem and Christian, Moslem and Jew.

IN ITS Turkish policy the United States has followed a line so cautious and so inconsistent with its immense power and prestige that it lays itself open to the terrible charge of being unimaginative, and there are many critics who use harsher epithets. We have carefully avoided pressure on the regime for political reform. Our Marshall Plan representatives have sounded an occasional minor-key note in wistful praise of liberal economy, but have delicately refrained from insisting. Our pretext for modesty in both fields has been that it would be undemocratic to interfere with the internal affairs of a sovereign state. Our real purpose has been to avoid rocking the alleged stability of a government situated on a frontier of the Soviet Union. In other words, we have been playing it safe.

How safe it is to rely on a government which has not earned the freely-given loyalty of its own people is a matter open to large conjecture. At any rate, unofficial observers who have spent time in Turkey without wearing blinders imported from Washington, know that the rulers of Turkey were ready to go as far in democratic reform after the war as their new champions in the West would want them to go. The one thing the Turks felt they did not dare lose was the friendship of the United States. If the canny politicians of Ankara have begun backtracking since then, it is because they have perceived with happy relief that the Americans are either timid or insincere about the urgency of democracy everywhere on our side of a divided world. It would pay dividends in our security and in Turkey's security if our government gave clear proof that we mean abroad what we say at home.

THE ORDEAL OF ARNOLD FRIEDMAN, PAINTER

Life and Works of an American Jewish Artist

WILLIAM SCHACK

THERE is a kind of artist we all know whose last will and scrapbook contains no appreciation of his work as long as his obituary in the New York *Times.* "We all" turn out to have been just his few friends, a few patrons, some of the artists who (curious or rival-furious) paused before his paintings in the galleries, an art critic and a museum curator or two, a dealer or three. Without repeated approval in the daily press, preferably reinforced by the artist's taking a walk through a plate-glass window (with photographers present), he never reaches more than the periphery of The Public. "We all" are not only not America—we are not even New York, but only 57th Street, two blocks East and one block West. The "well-known" artist of the obituary has therefore usually lived in indecent poverty ("struggled for many years") and died leaving his dependents (mentioned) in want (unmentioned); and even his fame is confined within the frame of our art world's little capital and pale.

The pattern has been repeated enough to have become a stereotype—except that lives, like paintings, are made unique by very small changes. Arnold Friedman was not an unknown, much less a rejected, artist, though he is only now, after his death, coming to be regarded as one of the major American artists of his generation. Yet he only escaped this standard pattern for a while and by the margin of a thin privet hedge. It was an actual hedge, bordering his own house, the symbol of his security. At the start of his career he decided not to live in a lone garret, not to raise a family in rags, never to pose for the bogus picturesque portrait of the starving artist.

HIS sharp eyes had looked squarely at poverty and found its features ugly. He was only five years old when his father—who had emigrated from Hungary with his wife—died, in 1878, leaving his mother with four other small children to support. She ran one of those wretched little East Side grocery stores open at all hours and giving their customers home service besides: milk and fresh rolls delivered in the morning. This was Arnold's first job. In his early teens, he became a wage-earner, working at the Produce Exchange. (Thrown in with his wages, he received a wonderful view of the harbor and of the immigrants thronging in, the women wearing their most brilliant skirts and shawls in honor of the landing. Later on, whenever Friedman needed a symbol to point up the public's obtuseness in art, he recalled that the leaders of the Produce Exchange were disgusted at seeing this "vulgar" outburst of color.)

At seventeen, he was virtually the sole sup-

WILLIAM SCHACK is the author of that remarkable biography of Louis Eilshemius which appeared in 1939, *And He Sat Among the Ashes.* Arnold Friedman, the subject of his present article, was a late-Impressionist painter whose importance to American art, in the opinion of at least one editor of COMMENTARY, may be even greater than Eilshemius's. Mr. Schack knew Friedman for years and was able to watch the development of his art at first hand. Like Friedman, Mr. Schack is a product of New York City. He was born in Brooklyn in 1898, attended Cornell University, and now lives in Manhattan, where he writes for a living. Among the magazines to which he has contributed are *Parnassus, Creative Art, The Arts, American Magazine of Art, Virginia Quarterly Review, Menorah Journal,* and *Architectural Forum.* He has just finished editing a *Plastics Encyclopedia,* which will be published some time this year. An exhibition of Arnold Friedman's work will open at the Jewish Museum in New York on February 13.

port of his family and began to work in the New York Post Office. It was a heavy load for a boy, but Arnold was robust enough in body and mind to take it: you couldn't give necessity the slip. The post-office job became permanent, and he did not think of giving it up to devote himself entirely to art. For the fear of being without means stayed deep inside him even after five, ten, fifteen years of security: necessity hadn't moved away an inch.

WHETHER he was burdened with too much responsibility to think of art as a career or did not become aware of his talent for a long time (which seems more probable), Friedman did not begin to study art until he was thirty-two years old. Until then, he had made drawings casually. Of his family, only his mother showed some interest in them; he himself apparently didn't take them too seriously, since he didn't keep them. He was so remote from the art world that he didn't even know where to get instruction, until mail kept coming his way at the post office addressed to the Art Students League. Even then, it took him three months to get up the courage to apply for admission. It hardly seems like the Friedman for whom, only a few years later, art became a passion, tenaciously pursued and violently brought to bed.

No doubt the passion was aroused by Robert Henri, who was then, both as teacher and painter, a leader of the progressive forces in American art. Many of his fellow-students were also spirited and talented. If some of them did not have the stamina to survive in the art world, others—Bellows, Hopper, Kent, DuBois, Pach, and Coleman—in time established their reputations as painters or critics. In 1908, after three years of evenings at the League (he was still on the job by day), Friedman took a trip to Paris. He wasn't there long enough to learn much about painting, but he was fortunate in meeting in his class a quiet, gentle girl of a well-to-do assimilated Jewish family. Renée Keller and the man who had matured in far less sheltered surroundings hit it off; they made an important date....

THE manufacturer of pumps, the engineers who design them, and the men who fabricate them in the shop, all make a living from pumps. The growers, the brokers, the vendors of fruit, all make a living from fruit. But the artist who tries to live from his work usually lives miserably, for he has to be both creator and salesman, and the two qualities are not often found together in the same person. In following his true calling, he has the satisfaction, intermittently, of being of the same company of other artists (other *great* artists, he thinks) who have suffered for it, too. He may despair, end in suicide, but he is drawn on by the hope of achieving status and security before he will have been tempted to give up.

The danger of this choice is that, if the going becomes too difficult, one may not have the heart to work, even though one's time is all one's own. There is the equal danger, in the alternative course which Friedman took—that of working at a humdrum job for an assured income (twenty-five dollars a week!)—of not having enough time and energy to paint after the demands of the job are satisfied. Perhaps he had no choice in the matter, knowing very well that he was neither a huckster who could sell his wares nor a courtier who could sell himself; knowing, too, that he could not make himself such, and would not if he could. He entered on the humbler way hopefully. A man who was just getting around to marrying at thirty-seven felt young; he was strong; and he was used to plodding along in harness and blinders every day, until the hour came when he could throw them off and revel in light and color. Two or three years after his marriage, with twenty-five dollars coming in *every* week, he was optimistic enough to buy himself a house in then rural Queens, complete with hedge and mortgage, with rooms enough for the babies to come and with an attic studio for the old man himself. That was the kind of garret artist he was going to be.

Time to paint? As a post-office clerk, his work week was forty-eight hours, and when the mail was heavy his tour of duty often lasted ten hours. If he was on the early shift from six AM to three PM and there was no overtime, he was home at four; and if the days were long enough there was still light to paint by after dinner. If he worked the late shift from one to nine PM, he could get in a few hours after breakfast. And then there was the whole of Sunday—until Albert came along, then Jules, Walter, and Betty. The least he could do for as patient, sympathetic, and undemanding a helpmate as an artist or any man ever had was to take the children off her hands on those precious Sundays.

Under such circumstances, even a man of fanatic determination like Friedman could not produce very much, especially since he was highly critical of his own work. Yet these circumstances were not reflected either in the subject matter of his paintings or their execution: his creations were an unhurried, quietistic world apart. His early canvases—landscape, still life, and figure alike—already revealed the essential qualities of his entire work: a freshness of perception (unhackneyed without being bizarre), simplification of subject, a compact sense of design, and a palette admirably in harmony with it. They were done with such conviction that they did not betray their piecemeal construction. For all that, Friedman was eight years out of art school and forty-two years old before he participated in his first group show. Ten more years passed before he had his first one-man show.

THERE is little need to dwell on the dominant influence in his work when he himself wrote wryly, on the back of one of his pictures: "Psst! Psst! Don't look now, mister, but your impressionism is showing.—Thanks."

Although he was well aware of all the art currents of his time, he tenaciously followed this first idiom which appealed to him, departing from its procedure of separate brush strokes of unmixed colors only in the direction of its variant, pointillism, and, in his figures, of its offshoot, Post-Impressionism. Pointillism was a purist form of Impressionism, employing only dot strokes with spaces between. Friedman achieved some excellent seascapes in this technique, but he used it for only a limited time, perhaps because he realized that it was as confining as it was pure. Had not Seurat, who invented it, also perfected and virtually exhausted it in his own short lifetime? Whenever you saw a Signac or Cross, did you not say to yourself, "But Seurat was already here?" And might not someone mistake Flushing Bay for Honfleur or Port-en-Bassin?

The original Impressionist idiom had greater potentialities. The French masters who had started it had worked it richly; in France Impressionism had spent itself a full half-century ago. Yet a generation later several American artists still used it fruitfully, and still, after Robinson, Twachtman, Lawson, and others, Friedman was able to create an Impressionist vein of his own. In the last decade of his life, he achieved his most unique canvases with those separate dabs of color. Painting landscapes exclusively in this period of his life, he stripped them of everything but large austere forms, approaching but never going over into pure abstraction in which the subject is entirely dissolved; and from the interplay of color in these simple forms he built his design.

In his figure painting, Friedman derived from the Post-Impressionists, who, retaining the high color brought in by Impressionism, re-emphasized the importance of design which the latter, delighting in atmospheric effects, had often ignored. The broad areas of color and the bold line which Van Gogh developed out of the Japanese prints and Impressionism appear in Friedman's figures. No doubt he was directly influenced by the Japanese prints himself, for some of his pre-Impressionist landscapes have their spacious design.

Typical of his figure painting is his widely exhibited "Father X" (1925), done from memory or from an unauthorized sketch of a priest who called at his post-office window. The figure is drawn in a continuous flowing line (repeated in the derby)—a line which is more than formally decorative and yet falls short of being fully expressive; it is set against a flat background of bright color. "I know damned well I can't 'droar,'" Friedman wrote. "Pity of it is there's so much dead (but unburied) droaring in American painting. Oleman Wm. Chase musta had the dope when he used to challenge his class with: 'Fetch me a bootblack from any street corner, & in two years I'll guarantee to make him a competent painter and draughtsman but (slyly) not an artist.' Sure enough, judging from those in the high seats of the mighty, the ole boy was some prophet."

Though he called many of his figures portraits, Friedman was interested in producing not a likeness, but a design. What's in a face? Eyes for horizontal symmetry, nose for a contrasting vertical line, mouth for balance, facial contour for a frame. All else was disturbance. A German critic praised these portraits as supremely objective (*"monumental sachlich"*), as against the "spiritual portraits" of the Germanic artists, who presumably took pains to render the harassments of time, weather, and indigestion which Friedman disposed of with a minimum of modeling. He avoided such subjective intensity even in the portrait he did of his mother in her old age, though he wrote on the back of it with fierce pride: "She could bite holes in Whistler's [Mother] and spit through them."

PEOPLE passing through the post office were often the unwitting subjects of these works; but even when members of the family posed for him he no sooner had laid out his design than he forgot the subject. Yet he was as furious (or pretended to be) when they failed to see the resemblance as he was with those who did not recognize his true intention: "'Your heads don't reach a Climax,' says the eminent Mr. Hopper.—Well, well, the Luks' Climax? The Bellows' Climax? The Marsh, Benton, Biddle and other members of the 'Peck's Bad Boy School of American Art,' their Climaxes? Well, well, what do you know!" This retort also appeared on the reverse side of a painting, like the quotations already given and those to come: they constitute his "journals."

Despite his point of departure in a well-established idiom, Friedman didn't think of himself as a camp-follower. "My aim," he wrote in a letter, "is to establish an American Palette which can be as readily and authentically identified as Philadelphia scrapple." Again: "No one man can make a trend or a movement. But he can start it! Here's a Beginning!"

The challenge is curious, coming from one who was scornful of the characteristic art movements of his time: "Expressionism to me was always a bilious concept embraced by bilious folk. When malaria is in fashion good health is taboo." Yet there is something of the violence of Expressionism in certain of his self-portraits in pencil; and to one critic who found a "nightmarish intensity" in some of the late landscapes, they were Expressionistic.

Friedman was just as impatient of abstract or non-objective painting, noting prematurely: "In spite of two subsidized and cushioned Guggendromes abstractionism gasps and languishes with few mourners." Yet one of his most intemperate dicta on this movement was written on the back of one of his most abstract canvases.

As for the discussions of all these movements: "Modern aestheticism with its obscurantism and obfuscation bears the same relation to the theology which haggled hotly over the number of angels that could dance on the point of a pin and has about the same influence on art as it did on true faith."

His own approach was a painter's: "Changes in Style? You must know then that paint is a coquette and as such must be variously coaxed, coerced, driven, or caressed, and there are as many methods as there are whims and caprices to be met."

FRIEDMAN'S first one-man show in 1925 at the Bourgeois Galleries had a mixed reception from the critics. In the New York *Evening Post,* Margaret Breuning praised it judiciously, but the close of her review—"It may also arouse hostility, as vital work often does"—anticipated the flat-footed opinion in the *Art News:* "He is not a pleasant painter."

A strange verdict this appears today, when these pictures may seem *too* pleasant, but it reflected the reaction of a good many people. Some of them found the paintings "primitive"—quite the thing you would expect from a Sunday painter: they didn't even know that he had been one of Henri's most gifted students, and believed he was self-taught. What can be called primitive in Friedman's work was never due to his not knowing how to set down exactly what he wanted to say, but to a deliberate, or at least conscious, simplification of vision: his mind let his eye relax to an archaic gaze. An artist who could handle the palette knife as Friedman did was certainly not primitive in his means. In the foreground of one of his pictures, a flock of pigeons is just rising from the pavement. The take-off of even a few birds, however small, even the fractional motors of hummingbirds, not only shatters the air but breaks up light and color. Friedman was able to capture exactly this detonating fragmentation of wings and air in a controlled explosion of paint. If a primitive were capable of rendering such an effect, he would be so delighted with it that he would make it his entire subject. For Friedman it was only a detail in a design.

THERE were others who saw his merit from the beginning—Guy Eglinton of the *Art News,* Murdock Pemberton of the *New Yorker.* Bourgeois sold several of his paintings—one to a prominent collector for one thousand dollars. Two years later, sponsored by a friend and patron, Dr. Nat Wolf, his work was exhibited in Germany. If the daily press was completely unresponsive, the critic I have quoted wrote a sympathetic article about him in an Essen magazine, *Der Scheinwerfer.* It was four years after his first one-man show before Friedman had another in New York, at the Kraushaar Gallery, and it was five years to his next one at J. B. Neumann's Contempora Art Gallery.

To these shows, the response continued to be mixed: warm praise from a few; grudging praise from others; neutrality or hostility from the rest. Friedman couldn't accept the verdict philosophically. For thirty years now he had served as a menial for the little freedom it gave him to paint. Each work cost him enormous effort, concentration. A man who does no more than smear a fence has his job appraised by neighbors before the paint is dry. How can an artist wait years for judgment and not be resentful of the qualified approval when it is finally rendered? In a more immediate than metaphysical sense, for an artist to *be* is to be *perceived.* Praise is his bread; he needs it—a slice at least—with every meal. A few admirers are not enough to supply it; and without it Friedman grew bitter.

As if his slow recognition were not galling enough, he was harassed at the same time by lack of money, troubled, too, by a touch of loneliness. The security he had paid so high a price for did not last too many years. His pay, which reached a maximum of forty-four dollars a week, hardly met the family's needs, even when it was augmented by the sale of two or three pictures a year. His pension when he retired in 1933 amounted to only twelve hundred dollars a year (with no provision at the time for a widow: another cause for concern). For a while, until his sons were able to help out, he was even hard put to it to buy his painting materials. The mortgage was not paid off, and there was no money to renovate the house until a barter deal arranged by C. S. Gherardi, the real-estate agent who had sold him the house, plastered the kitchen, fitted it with new sink, cabinets, lighting fixtures, and linoleum flooring, and brought in a new oil burner. That ordinary people, for whom 57th Street was only the street north of 56th, should buy his paintings simply because they liked him heartened Friedman as much as the merchandise. But this deal took place only five months before his death. (The tribute from another unassuming art-lover, the sometime Postmaster General, the Hon. James J. Farley, did not arrive until he had read about the post-office clerk who was also an artist in the obituary of the New York *Times.*)

"You can be insolated [insulated?] without being isolated," Friedman wrote in his journals about this time. Yes, and you can be isolated without being lonely. But I think that loneliness contributed to his bitterness. He had his family, and his wife and daughter (as she grew up) were sympathetic to his work. But all the good friends of his art school days, except Pach, had drifted away. He had little time or inclination for mere socializing. He could not cultivate and get up entertainments for "friends" on whom to force an informal exhibition, swing a sale. And he had no stomach at all for the coquetries of the cocktail party: to Friedman, who had told a patron, "You're not giving me charity!" the artists hovering around, toadying to, all but soliciting, possible patrons, seemed despicable compared to honest streetwalkers making their last frantic appeals at the café-closing hour. Nor did he find companionship in the artist groups he joined, for they did not band together out of mutual respect and good will but from necessity: wolfpacks, for defense and what little offense they could muster.

For all his frustrations, Friedman was not the kind who goes to pieces in adversity. To look at him, say in his sixtieth year, you couldn't tell how deeply troubled he was. Very tall, lean and tough, with a strikingly expressive head, he could have passed for fifty. You wouldn't have suspected that this jaunty-looking fellow was writing letters to museum directors, pleading for exhibitions. Since he was afraid to become aggressive, those letters were discursive, not trenchant like the journals; and since he was too proud, he spoke in behalf of other neglected *originales*—Branchard, Eilshemius, Canadé—as well as of himself. But his intention was plain enough. Look at him again now: can't you see something disquieting in those deep-set blazing eyes? Listen to him talk: in his emphatic accents do you hear only a forceful man? And if you did not see or hear him, you can find out what was going on inside him by reading more of his journals.

They begin with the strong opinions of a man who is entitled to have them: "American painting like American cooking is efficient but tasteless." "The file clerks who call themselves aesthetes are unhappy until they tag a work and file it away." The latter quotation is already quasi-impersonal. One can read into it his oblique resentment of people who did not like his work because they could not classify it.

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The same increasing animus is found in the more directly personal observations. For a starter: "I am one who is quite content even happy when permitted to go to the devil, but quite wretched when told to go there." Does he sound gay, reckless (remember the post office!), *vive la vie bohème?*

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YET when the Metropolitan Museum of Art bought his "Unemployed" in 1940, he told the reporter who was doing a feature article about him that art was purely an avocation with him. "My main job is raising my children. . . . I'm not really a professional [painter]." At the moment he may have thought it the modest or the properly American thing to say. (Me an artist? G'wan! That's just a sideline.) But he was too honest to be taken in by his own blarney, even within the period of the same interview. Later on he had to admit that "my work in the post office burned me like the very hinges of hell. . . . " Still, "I'm not complaining. . . . " The final, simple truth on that job of his, Friedman confided to a page of the journals: "The post office? It was one way, probably a lame way, of ducking the cadging, pettifogging, lickspittling course exacted from the artists by the American collectors and dealers, with the few exceptions which are cheerfully granted."

In his last years, there was always a disappointment to offset a satisfaction. How eagerly he submitted a design to a competition for post-office murals, and how harassed he felt at being compelled to change this, that and the other before it was considered. (In the end, he had three charming panels accepted.) How justly resentful he was, despite participation in many exhibitions, that he was never, not once, invited to show at the Whitney Museum, presumably *the* center of American art (he thought it was because he had offended the directress once upon a time). For the reverse, how touchingly he responded to every little surge of recognition: the few paragraphs in an article of mine, the brief tributes in the books of DuBois, Cheney, and Mellquist, and—what must have astonished him most of all, coming from a critic who championed the *avant-garde* painting he detested—the precise definition and warm approval of his late style by Clement Greenberg in the *Nation*.

Add the steady showing of his work, at last, by the Marquié Gallery and his gradual acceptance by the museums, and—to an outsider—the sum of his encouragements seems to exceed the sum of his disappointments. To a man of sensibility who was still living the equation, however, the frustrations may well have had a disproportionate emotional impact. Nevertheless, I do not believe that, in the end, Friedman felt himself to be defeated. Certainly he never lost heart. The last decade of his life was in fact his most productive period. Able at last to give his full time to painting, he brought up the number of his oils to around three hundred. In these ten years, too, he created his most distinctive works—the semi-abstract canvases in which he gave the Impressionist idiom his own accent. Even in the few weeks of his final illness, when he was forbidden to climb the stairs to his studio, he still lay thinking of new work and his mind sneaked up to his brushes and paint. He never conceded that his time was running out: it came to an end December 29, 1946. There was no service to mark his passing, no moldering bones and a stone.

Since his death, several exhibitions of his work have been held and more critics have come to appraise him at his true worth: his monument is going up as he would have it, in canvas and color.

DICKENS, FAGIN, AND MR. RIAH

The Intention of the Novelist

EDGAR JOHNSON

AGITATION about the film version of *Oliver Twist* and its release in Berlin has given widespread currency to a belief that Charles Dickens himself was anti-Semitic, and that Fagin was conceived as "a savage racial caricature." Dickens describes Fagin, it has been pointed out, as "a very old, shrivelled Jew," "dressed in a greasy flannel gown," and with a "villainous and repulsive face . . . obscured by a quantity of matted red hair."

The ruffianly Sikes refers to him as an "infernal rich, plundering, thundering old Jew." And it might be added that Dickens portrays him as in the highest degree cowardly, treacherous, greedy, scheming, and vindictive.

But these facts cannot be understood in isolation. Does Dickens make Fagin more evil, we should ask, than the ferocious Sikes or the villainous Monks, neither of whom is a Jew? Are Fagin's hateful qualities presented as if Dickens thought them not simply human but peculiarly Jewish? Has he drawn other derogatory pictures of Jews in his writings, and no favorable ones? Do his utterances elsewhere imply an ill opinion of Jews as a group?

Before dealing directly with these matters, let us recall that in social thought Dickens was an advanced liberal, with a strong tendency toward the more humanitarian wing of the philosophical radicals, but with a fierce antagonism to the dogmas of utilitarian political economy. He hated the new Poor Law of 1834—a product of abstract economic theory—as an instrument of coldhearted cruelty to the poor; and he never wavered in demanding protective mine and factory legislation for the workers. In Gradgrind and Bounderby, of *Hard Times,* he created two annihilating symbols of the alliance between a harsh "hard-facts" social philosophy and the brutalities of business greed. In an age when many people still branded labor unions as criminal conspiracies and considered strikes of dubious legality, Dickens was among those who affirmed the right of working men to organize and strike.

Dickens had no formal affiliation with any religious body. His parents were Church of England, though not very devout. Dickens himself revered the moral teachings of Jesus, but was impatient of almost all theological dogmas, including the doctrine of the Trinity, and had sittings for a number of years in a Unitarian chapel. He favored disestablishment of the English Church, detested the narrow puritanism of the dissenting sects, and had no sympathy for Roman Catholicism, but was a firm believer in religious freedom and vigorously opposed all intolerance and persecution.

A strong emancipationist, he felt personally humiliated and stained at being obliged to accept the enforced services of Negro slaves when he was in Maryland and Vir-

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As a by-product of the successful efforts of Jewish groups to prevent the showing of the film version of *Oliver Twist* in this country, and the more recent (and unsuccessful) effort to ban the novel from the New York public schools, there is a noticeable tendency in the public mind to classify Charles Dickens as an enemy of the Jews. The facts of the case hardly warrant this judgment, in the opinion of Edgar Johnson, chairman of the English department at the City College of New York, who here outlines what is known as Dickens's relation to the "Jewish question." Mr. Johnson is the author of five books, and is at present working on a critical biography of Dickens which is scheduled for publication by Simon and Schuster some time in 1951.

ginia in 1842. He defended the Swiss Revolution of 1846 and the Continental uprisings of 1848, opposed the Second Empire, and wrote a plea for the Italian political exiles. He insisted that working men must unite to keep out of Parliament men who ignored their needs, and in the face of widespread fears reiterated his faith that the new voters admitted by the Reform Bill of 1867 would discharge their responsibilities for the common good.

It is not impossible, of course, that a man of these beliefs should also be anti-Semitic, but it would at least be incongruous. The entire pattern of Dickens's sympathies is one of deep and warmly felt concern for the unhappy and injured everywhere. His kindness of heart was so notorious that a writer of begging letters listed Dickens, Sir Robert Peel, and Queen Adelaide as the three likeliest touches for a five-pound note in all London. His writings are a vivid record of nearly all the humane causes in Victorian England. "God gave him," wrote the Earl of Shaftesbury, "a general retainer against all suffering and oppression." That only Jews should be excluded from his good will would be almost beyond belief. Nor in fact were they.

On rare occasions, it is true, he refers to Jews in his personal letters in terms that might be taken to imply a contemptuous attitude toward them. For example, I have noted two occasions when he uses the word "Jew" as a conventional synonym for unscrupulous rapacity. In the midst of one of his violent quarrels with his publisher, Richard Bentley, he writes to his friend Forster, "No news as yet from the 'infernal, rich, plundering, thundering old Jew.'" And to Thomas Hood, six years later, of a business agreement between the latter and *his* publisher, Henry Colburn, Dickens says, "There can be no doubt that he took a money-lending, bill-broking, Jew-clothes-bagging, Saturday-night pawnbroking advantage of your temporary situation." (Neither Bentley nor Colburn, incidentally, was a Jew.) Arranging some amateur dramatics with the Honorable Mrs. Richard Watson in 1850, he advises her to use the services of Nathan, the theatrical costume-maker in the Haymarket, telling her that Nathan is a Jew, but "a very respectable man indeed." In one or two subsequent letters he jocosely calls Nathan the "Child of Israel."

None of these remarks, however, is in a context of hostile comment on the Jewish people, or occurs save as the briefest passing reference. In 19th-century England they did not have such a troubled background of violence and hatred as they would have in our time. Indeed, similar expressions may be found in nearly all the major writers of the period; Thackeray regularly gives auctioneers, money-lenders, and the keepers of sponging-houses Jewish names, and uses patronizing epithets like "a pink-eyed Jew boy." Unless they are very numerous, therefore, or are colored by other signs of prejudice, such turns of phrase in any of these writers hardly imply more than an uncritical use of conventional phraseology. Our sensibilities, scarred by recent world experiences, wince at this thoughtlessness, but we exaggerate if we read it as hostile. More than this, in Dickens's case the weight of his few careless references dwindles to insignificance in the enormous bulk of his correspondence. In the eight thousand or so of Dickens's letters that I have read, including about twenty-five hundred that have never appeared in print, I can recall not even a dozen in which Dickens uses any expressions of the kind.

THE charge that Dickens was anti-Semitic, in fact, has never been based on these details, but has rested almost entirely upon his portrayal of Fagin. But it should be noted that, aside from being called "the Jew," Fagin is given none of the characteristics ordinarily attributed to the Jew,* not even the usual earmarks of caricature. Fagin is clearly delineated as not a Jew by religion: in the condemned cell he drives off with curses "venerable men of his own persuasion" who endeavor to give him religious consolation. He has no monstrous bulge of nose, no weird or frenzied gestures, no strange Hebraic idioms, not even the lisp or accent of the stage Jew. (A minor Jewish character in *Oliver Twist* talks with a lisp, and much later, in *Great Expectations,* a Jew with a lisp appears briefly, but Dickens does not employ the lisp to distinguish Jews as such; in *Hard Times* the amiable Mr. Sleary, of Sleary's Circus, who is not a Jew, also lisps.)

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* Nor are Cruikshank's illustrations of Fagin, despite popular assertions to the contrary, derived from the caricature Jew. Curiously enough, Fagin actually resembles nobody so much as Cruikshank himself; and the artist told Horace Mayhew that the famous plate of Fagin awaiting his death in Newgate was inspired by a glimpse he caught of himself in the mirror, biting his fingernails in anxiety over his difficulties in conceiving the picture.

For all the frightful power with which Fagin is conceived, Dickens did not offer him as a realistic portrait. He knew the Jews of Houndsditch and had a copious acquaintance with the London stage, but Fagin is based neither on observation of living Jews nor on the clichés of the theater. Instead, "the merry old Jew" took form from an image in his creator's mind that Dickens regarded with an emotion of half-horrible enjoyment: an image of hilarious evil exultant in cunning self-applause. Daniel Quilp, the deformed dwarf of *The Old Curiosity Shop,* is a grotesque mutation of the type, in whom the malice forever boiling up out of a hellish high-spiritedness is distilled to an atrocious playfulness. Still another is the villainous Rigaud in *Little Dorrit.* Nobody has deduced from Quilp that Dickens believed in the malignance of all dwarfs and hunchbacks, although Delattre's *Dickens et la France* does argue absurdly (ignoring Charles Darnay and Dr. Manette) that Rigaud proves Dickens to have been prejudiced against the French.

No literary criticism of the 19th century with which I am acquainted suggests that the characterization of Fagin betrays anti-Semitism in its author. Nor has any such feeling apparently been widespread among Jews themselves. More than one Jew of my acquaintance, brought up in households not insensitive on the subject, has told me that Dickens's works, including *Oliver Twist,* were a favorite family reading, and that the thought of Dickens as an anti-Semite never entered his mind. With a single exception, the 19th-century Jewish periodicals that I have been able to locate entirely ignore Fagin, although they voice many complaints against Gentile prejudice and against the delineation of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice.*

NOT until 1854—seventeen years after the first appearance of *Oliver Twist*—have I found any Jewish comment on Dickens. Then, however, the *Jewish Chronicle* in a leading article regrets the "despicable and hateful" part he assigned the Jew in his fiction, and asks "why Jews alone should be excluded from the sympathizing heart" of this great author and powerful friend of the oppressed. Later in the year, answering an invitation to an anniversary dinner of the Westminster Jewish Free School, Dickens declared: "I know of no reason that the Jews can have for regarding me as 'inimical' to them. On the contrary, I believe I do my part towards the assertion of their civil and religious liberty, and in my *Child's History of England* I have expressed a strong abhorrence of their persecution in old time."

Nine years later, in 1863, Dickens defended himself in greater detail. Mrs. Eliza Davis, a Jewish woman whose husband had bought Tavistock House from Dickens, had written him a letter telling him that Jews regarded his portrayal of Fagin as "a great wrong." He responded that if they did they were "a far less sensible, a far less just, and a far less good-tempered people than I have always supposed them to be." Fagin, he pointed out, was the only Jew in the story (he had forgotten the insignificant character of Barney), and "all the rest of the wicked *dramatis personae* are Christians." Fagin had been described as a Jew, he explained, primarily because a very large proportion of the receivers of stolen goods in the time to which the story referred were Jews. And finally, in calling Fagin a Jew no imputation had been suggested against the Jewish religion; the name had been used in the same way that one might call a Frenchman or Spaniard or Chinese by those names. "I have no feeling towards the Jewish people but a friendly one," Dickens concluded his letter. "I always speak well of them, whether in public or in private, and bear my testimony (as I ought to do) to their perfect good faith in such transactions as I have ever had with them. . . ."

ALTHOUGH Dickens felt it absurd to regard Fagin as typifying his feeling about Jews, he was nevertheless troubled at being so seriously misinterpreted. In his next novel, *Our Mutual Friend,* he included a group of Jewish characters, of whom the most important is Mr. Riah, a gentle and upright old Jew caught in the toils of a Christian moneylender. Into the mouth of this very usurer, furthermore, Dickens places some of the ugliest Gentile libels against the Jews, letting his meanness serve as a sufficient commentary on their falsehood. Lizzie Hexam, one of the two heroines, takes refuge in affliction among a community of Jews, who treat her with the utmost generosity. To a clergyman worried about her remaining with them, she defends her Jewish employers: "The gentleman certainly is a Jew," she says, "and the lady, his wife, is a Jewess, and I was first brought to their notice by a Jew. But I think there cannot be kinder people in the world." Near the end of the book there is a passage showing that Dickens had reflected upon Mrs. Davis's reproach and understood how it came to be made, even though it imputed to him an injustice he had never intended. "For it is not, in Christian countries, with the Jews as with other peoples. Men say, 'This is a bad Greek, but there are good Greeks. This is a bad Turk, but there are good Turks.' Not so with the Jews. Men find the bad among us easily enough—among what peoples are the bad not easily found?—but they take the worst of us as samples of the best; they take the lowest of us as presentations of the highest; and they say 'All Jews are alike.'"

To Mrs. Davis, certainly, the meaning of this group of Jewish characters was clear. She wrote to Dickens during the course of the novel's serial publication in terms that can be inferred from his reply: "I have received your letter with great pleasure, and hope to be (as I have always been in my heart) the best of friends with the Jewish people." Some years later she gave him a copy of Benisch's Hebrew and English Bible, inscribed: "Presented to Charles Dickens, in grateful and admiring recognition of his having exercised the noblest quality men can possess—that of atoning for an injury as soon as conscious of having inflicted it." These words, Dickens told her, were more gratifying than he could possibly express, "for they assure me that there is nothing but good will left between you and me and a people for whom I have a real regard, and to whom I would not wilfully have given an offense or done an injustice for any worldly consideration."

Artistically, of course, Dickens's explanation on the subject of Fagin had been completely sound. *Oliver Twist* had expressed no sentiments against the Jews as a people, and there was nothing in the delineation of Fagin any more representative of them than Squeers was of men with only one eye or Uriah Heep of men with red hair. But not all people can read a work of art in the spirit of its meaning. Blind prejudice and the victims of its rancor alike twist the artist's voice to attack the weak and helpless; and it is clear that Dickens himself came to understand the danger of portraits such as Fagin. Surely the man whose developing awareness of the injustices of his time grew ever more acute and painful throughout the years, and whose flaming hatred of cruelty melted into an all-embracing sympathy with misfortune, was no intolerant anti-Semite and Jew-baiter. We have ample warrant to feel that, if he were alive today, no man would sound a more clarion note against discrimination than Charles Dickens or brave its evils with a nobler indignation.

THE DOWRY

A Story

HARRY FELTENSTEIN, JR.

"AS WE grow older and reach the ripe years," Daniel said to his wife, lying back in his chair and pressing his fingertips together in a half-serious archiepiscopal gesture, so that he reminded her more than usual of a praying mantis, "the years just before the decline, the years of—say—twenty-nine, death . . . death," he paused and swallowed, his eyes turning slowly away from her, "death. . . ." His voice trailed off.

She looked at him in some exasperation and bit her thumb nail, for it was one of his least attractive habits to leave sentences unfinished. "Do go on," she said at last.

He was surprised and annoyed by her impatience and said rather curtly that he had decided the observation was too commonplace to finish. He had been about to say that death had increased in immediacy; it was suddenly all about; that in the old days there had been less of it.

"And the winters were colder, too," she said.

"Exactly," he answered, and they were both silent.

In a little while he picked up his grandmother's letter and began to read it aloud.

"I'm sorry I did not sound more happy to hear your news, but that is the way I feel. When they are small, they step on your lap, and when they are big, on your heart. I guess I feel bitter because I did so much in my young years and thought my children better than all others. Well, the result is not what I expected. I spend my days and nights alone all the year round. Aunt Sarah has a big house I helped her pay for, thinking I could live with her after Louise got married, but no, she says her husband comes first. She says I hurt his feelings years ago, so living together is out of the question. I do not know when the feeling was hurt and asked her to find out when and what that feeling was. This is over two years ago. I never found out. My conscience does not hurt me, all the same I very seldom go and sit down for a meal with them. I prefer to stay at home and think what became of all my plans." He stopped reading, and Jean saw that tears had come into his eyes.

Soon he began again to read. "Well, enough. The cup runs over when it is too full. Had a letter from Marie Strauss. They are still at Mackinac. Uncle Dave is very sick. They wait for him to follow Aunt Gussie." Daniel stopped reading and laid the letter on his lap. "How dreadful it must be to find yourself the last one left of your whole generation, and to see everything so clearly. Your family gone, dispersed, feckless. Grandma understands everything. 'They wait for him to follow Aunt Gussie.' "

"Yes," said his wife. "They had a long time to wait."

"They're old men themselves."

"He must be almost ninety," she said.

"Eighty-eight or eighty-nine. Aunt Gussie was eighty." His sorrow had shifted momentarily from his grandmother, and he saw his great-uncle, thin, of medium height, his shaggy white hair and thick drooping mustache, his sagging shoulders and loose arms, his whole Mark Twain appearance, and his vast geniality, and his eternal open love for his wife, who was short and so very plump, with the rosy complexion of a child and the fine, translucent skin of the very old.

HARRY FELTENSTEIN, JR. was born in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1920 and graduated from Harvard in 1942. He is at present working on a novel. This is Mr. Feltenstein's first published story.

"Only Mr. Whitehead had skin like hers," he said.

Jean nodded; they had spoken of this before. "We really ought to ask Edward over," she said in a little while.

He sighed and put the letter on the table beside him. "I've wanted this so long," he said, not answering her. The envelope from his grandmother was still lying on his lap; now he picked it up and carefully drew from it a piece of yellowed paper. "I'd begun to think Grandma would never send it. She must have because of Uncle Dave. It's from the age of gods and heroes. I've always thought that . . . that . . ." his voice trailed away, but his wife said nothing, ". . . that . . ." with an immense effort, "this is the middle ground between belief and disbelief, the excluded middle. I believe it, but I can't believe it's true." He was silent, looking at the paper in his hands. "This is all that's left of all the past," he said softly a moment later. "No one loves the past any more. I wish there were something more. I want our son to have a history." He shook the old paper, his face at once sad and angry. "Parents and old papers and old stories are all the same to them." He paused. "October the ninth, 1891. Dear Madam," he said slowly, for he was translating German, "We have instructed our American representatives, Messrs. Ladenburg, Thalmann and Company, to pay to you the sum of nine hundred marks, which is the amount remaining in the fund established in favor of the women of the Lazarus family. Our congratulations are also due you, and may you and your family have great happiness. With this letter we give you notice that our books are closed on the Lazarus account and that we have carried out to the end our responsibility. We are your respectful servants. Messrs. Maner and Plant, Cassel."

They were quiet for a time, and then Daniel asked his wife to make some coffee. She left the room, and he continued to think with a sweet melancholy of the days that were no more when he sat before his grandmother's mirror, upon the creaking little bench, and saw ranged before him the faces of his ancestors, some stern, some smiling, but all belonging to a dead and ancient world. He saw their drooping walrus mustaches, their immense leg-of-mutton sleeves, their long noses, their enormous bosoms; and all the old photographs in their bronze and ivory frames seemed to merge into a single profoundly sad, though indistinct, picture of death. He remembered the story of the dowry, which his grandmother had told him so long ago, and it seemed to him that he was standing in the street of that little German town and that all about him were rising whispers of fear and sarcasm and solicitude and anger. For a moment it seemed to him that he was the young rabbi who was about to enter the haunted house, and then the feeling passed, and he was once again merely one of the spectators.

The house was very old; the empty windows beneath the gambrel roof were dark already, though evening had not yet fallen; and the untended field in which it stood was a tangled mass of undergrowth, which blocked the gate, hid the path, and choked the doorway.

Several old Jews were gathered round the young man, plucking at his sleeves, beseeching him not to enter. But he smiled and shook his head, saying that he must rid the world of this devil and show the power of the Lord God, blessed be He. Then he looked about and saw how near the sun had come to the horizon, and he gently lifted their hands from his arm, kissed them, said a few words of reassurance, blessed them all, and pushed his way through the weeds and entered the house.

He quickly found his way into the principal room of the first floor and saw with a fear he could not deny the great fireplace of which he had been told. Drawing his phylacteries, like a protecting sword, from their little silken bag, he slowly approached the place at which had been found the bodies of all those who had sought to win Satan's treasure. His terror had become very great as he had walked through those echoing rooms, and it was only by sternly turning his attention to the Lord that he could bring his trembling body near that spot of hell.

The gloom was very deep; night was upon him. He bowed his head and began his prayers for the closing of the day. When he had finished these, he began to speak to Jehovah: he prayed for the good of man and the defeat of evil; he prayed for those who had gone before and for those who were yet to go, for those who were wise and those who were foolish, for those who were proud and those who were humble, for those who kept His commandments and those who knew Him not.

As he prayed, the last light vanished from the sky. All the watchers outside the gate turned and hastened away, some sorrowfully and some rejoicing that the day would find one less rabbi in the world, but no one believing that any power could save that fanatical young man.

The rabbi prayed in the utter night, losing himself in the Lord and His sweet and awful succor, so that time and fear were forgotten, and he felt, as he had never felt before, that he had entered into the very presence of the Lord. He felt his being swell with ecstasy, and he cried out, "O Lord, let the light of thy countenance fall upon those who love thee and those who hate thee, and make all those who wait without see thy mighty power. Use me, O Lord of Hosts, as thy spear, as the shield of Abraham! Let this be my service to thee: let others love thee, and others praise thee, and others serve thee in their family's bosom; let it be my single service to show thy mighty power!"

At that instant a hellish crashing and growling arose above him, a hideous clawing in the chimney, and from the fireplace billowed clouds of choking soot. The rabbi knew that Death had found him, but he did not pause in his prayers.

Now in a gust of vileness like the breath of a charnel house, and roarings like all the prisoners of Sheol, scrapings, scratchings, falling mortar, there appeared upon the hearth three giant dogs, all phosphorescent like devilfish, with bloody eyes and gaping muzzles. But still the rabbi prayed. They crouched to spring, but still he prayed; they snarled and clashed their teeth, but he saw them not, or only as wraiths, looking through them and beyond, upon the Lord.

Now they sniffed and growled and snapped at one another's flanks; now and again they turned toward him, roared and shook their heads furiously; but he did not pause; his voice was clear and loud. Soon the beasts circled about, sniffing the hearth, then lay down like house dogs, their heads upon their paws, and closed their eyes. Still the rabbi prayed.

Before the dawn had pierced those weed-entangled windows, the beasts suddenly awoke and arose, shaking themselves and growling softly. They looked upon the young man, who had not paused in his prayers, and turned upon the hearth and entered the fireplace, where they stopped and scratched furiously at the stones: then they gathered their legs beneath them and sprang up the chimney. When the last sound had died away, the morning light at last penetrated the room, the sun rose majestically above the horizon; a bird sang in the thicket outside the window and hopped from twig to twig, shaking the sunlight, which fell upon the hearth before the rabbi.

He paused and sighed; he tightened his phylacteries and arranged his shawl; and then he began his morning prayers.

When he had completed the ritual, he unhurriedly removed his phylacteries, replaced them in the little silken bag, and went from the house. The villagers were awaiting him, huddled together. He smiled upon them and blessed them; they rushed forward and surrounded him, some faces joyous and some angry and wondering. "A *maggid,* a holy man!" an old man cried, falling upon his knees and kissing the rabbi's hand. They bore him to the synagogue and joined in a prayer of thanksgiving, and he told them of what had passed during the night. Then they feasted. When the feast was over, they begged him to live among them and be their teacher, and he said he would. Then he told them to enter the house and dig beneath the hearth and to bring to him whatever they found. They found there a bag of gold, and they brought it to him.

"This will be a happy town: we shall be fruitful here and multiply." And he gave the money into the hands of Plant, the banker, that it might serve as the dowry for all the girls who were descended from him, because a good rabbi can seldom lay aside money for his daughters.

A LITTLE after nine Edward knocked at the door. "Jean," he said, kissing her and tossing his hat onto a chair, "how splendidly you're looking." He stepped back and carefully examined her figure. "I swear I'd never guess."

She tried not to show her displeasure. "We're so happy you could come," she said, leading him to the living room. "Daniel and I were lonesome for one of the old familiar faces. We called you on the spur of the moment."

"I had a tentative engagement, but I broke it," he said amiably. "I thought you probably hadn't heard the news." He stood in the center of the room, rubbing his hands together, and looked at her questioningly.

Jean was watching him and smiling somewhat like a hostess who has forgotten the name of a guest; she was thinking how like and how peculiarly unlike his grandfather, Uncle Dave, he was.

"Have you heard the news?" he said again.

"What news?" she asked in quick alarm.

"Granddad died this morning."

"Oh." She stood there for a moment; then she went to the door and called, "Daniel, Ed is here."

A moment later Daniel came in. "What's wrong, darling?" he said when he saw the sad smile his wife turned upon him.

"Uncle Dave died this morning," she said. She half extended her hand to him, but she was restrained by Edward's presence.

"Ah," he said, glancing away from her. "Did you bring the news, Ed?" he asked a moment later, in a deliberate, concerned, disguised voice, shaking hands with his cousin.

"Yes," Edward said. "Mother called me at noon. He died at breakfast." He spoke very easily.

"What do you mean?" Daniel said in a tone of annoyance. Jean watched him anxiously; he lost his temper quickly.

They sat down on the long couch before the bookcases. Edward took a highball and Daniel a fresh cup of coffee.

Edward sipped the drink before he answered. "His nurse went out for a minute while he was having breakfast, to get some cream or something, and when she came back, he was dead."

"Where was everyone else?" Daniel asked coldly.

"They were all still asleep."

Daniel sipped his coffee.

"It's all for the best," Edward said, pinching the end of his nose in one of his characteristic gestures. "He had nothing to live for since Grandma died."

"Of course," Daniel said.

"He felt so badly about it."

"Of course."

"He was a great old man. Hung on till the very end. But tight as the day is long; always thinking someone was trying to get the best of him."

"They're going to bury him beside Aunt Gussie, aren't they?" Jean asked.

"Oh, of course. What did you think?"

"I was afraid they might bury him at Mackinac, or some place." She was very nervous.

"Of course not," Edward answered, frowning slightly. "I understand it's all in the will. Besides, there's the family plot. We're all buried there." He continued to look at her, as though he thought he might have been insulted. At last, as no one spoke, he gave up the suspicion and began to speak with great animation, meanwhile rising and mixing himself another drink at the portable bar. "Life is strange. We got used to death in France. Buddy next to you—poof—" he snapped his fingers, "gone! That's why Granddad's death doesn't affect me as much as you might think. Old soldier. Never said die." He sat down on the floor in front of them. "Everyone has to die some day. Can't complain when it comes: he was the boss for a long time. God, I don't know how Dad stuck it out. But you can stick out anything if you think it's your duty. I remember—this is something I don't think I ever mentioned before—I remember once when we were holed up in a castle near Combrai, well, it wasn't really a castle, more like a château—a country house—you know what I mean. We got there second, and there wasn't much left to the place, but they'd overlooked a cellar full of brandy. Without it, the place would have been unbearable. There must have been a whole army there before us, and they'd made the whole place into a latrine. It was really almost unbearable, but we had to stay there because that's where the wires were run. You just can't imagine how that place stank. Finally someone had the idea of fumigating it by burning the furniture, so that's what we did, burned up the stinking old rugs, the chairs—they were all gilt—the pianos, the drapes, everything that would burn: it was better than scrubbing the place out. We burned everything right in the rooms—I don't know why the whole place didn't go up. It wasn't so bad after that, and there was all that brandy and wine. But I often think that if I could stand that, I could stand anything."

No one spoke for a little while, then Daniel said in so amiably impulsive a tone that his wife looked at him in surprise, "Ed, I want to ask you a favor."

"Why sure, Daniel. What is it?"

"Did your grandmother ever show you a letter she got from Germany when she was married, a letter that came with some money for her dowry?"

"Her dowry?" Edward repeated slowly. "Why yes, Daniel! Of course I remember! You mean that old story about the dogs finding the money. Of course!" He snapped his fingers and pursed his lips in wonder. "I haven't thought of it in years. Grandma told me about it when I was a child. What do you know about that! After all these years!" He paused. "Why, is there some money left? Is there some letter about it?"

"Oh no," Daniel said, "there's no more money. But I'd be terribly grateful if you'd find out if Uncle Dave still had that letter. There must have been one. All the sisters got them. They were from a banking firm named Maner and Plant in Cassel. It might be in his safe deposit box."

"Sure I will, Daniel," Edward said. He made a note in a little leather-bound memorandum book, murmuring, "Letter that came with dowry from Germany. Maner and Plant." He looked up, returning the book to his pocket. "Easiest thing in the world! But why do you want it?"

"Just sentimental reasons," Daniel said with sudden curtness.

"What ever happened to all the money?"

"It ran out," Daniel said.

"Oh, I see," Edward said, but it was clear that he was not altogether convinced.

They talked about old times in St. Louis and summers in Wisconsin, about what had become of old friends, and who had become rich, and how. At last Edward looked at his watch and said he had to go, that he had a late date with a very sweet little number: he rolled his eyes at Jean in good-humored and avuncular and half-intentional vulgarity.

As they stood by the door, Daniel said hesitantly, "You won't forget about that letter, will you, Ed?"

"Of course not," he said heartily, clasping Daniel tightly about the upper arm. "Of course not," he said, giving him a little shake and a broad smile. "I'll write Mother tonight."

He turned to Jean and kissed her on the cheek. "So long. See you soon. I'll let you know as soon as I hear, Daniel. So long." He turned upon them one last smile, and Jean had once again, but even more sharply, a consciousness of the perverted likeness he bore to his grandfather, the same slightly drooping nose, the same pointed chin, the same bright eyes set rather too close together, the same thin and slightly stooping form; but all the grandeur lost. He raised his hand, two fingers extended, in a parting salute, stepped into the hall, and closed the door behind him.

Daniel and Jean returned to the living

room and sat down again. They didn't speak for some time, but at last Jean asked rather uncertainly, for she wasn't sure of her husband's mood, "Do you think he'll get it?"

"No. The bastard," Daniel said gloomily. "There may not even be another letter. But I'll never know. I . . . I. . . ." He was silent, and Jean closed her eyes, overcome by a sudden access of sorrow, at the world, at the fate of all things, at the old age and death of even her unborn child. Daniel shrugged and stood up. "I should never have told him he'd be doing me a favor." He caught sight of a tear on his wife's cheek, and bent and kissed her on the forehead. "Try not to feel too sad," he said softly and went from the room.

NICODEMUS

HOWARD NEMEROV

I WENT under cover of night
By back streets and alleyways,
Not as one secret and ashamed
But with a natural discretion.
I passed by a boy and a girl
Embraced against the white wall
In parts of shadow, parts of light,
But though I turned my eyes away, my mind shook
Whether with dryness or their driving blood;
And a dog howled once in a stone corner.

II

Rabbi, I said,
How is a man born, being old?
From the torn sea into the world
A man may be forced only the one time
To suffer the indignation of the child,
His childish distempers and illnesses.
I would not, if I could, be born again
To suffer the miseries of the child,
The perpetual nearness to tears,
The book studied through burning eyes,
The particular malady of being always ruled
To ends he does not see or understand.

A man may be forced only the one time
To the slow perception of what is meant
That is neither final nor sufficient,
To the slow establishment of a self
Adequate to the ceremony and respect
Of other men's eyes; and to the last
Knowledge that nothing has been done,
The bitter bewilderment of his age,
A master in Israel and still a child.

III

Rabbi, all things in the springtime
Flower again, but a man may not
Flower again. I regret
The sweet smell of lilacs and the new grass
And the leaves put forth of the cedar
When we are done with the long winter.

Rabbi, sorrow has mothered me
And humiliation been my father,
But neither the ways of the flesh
Nor the pride of the spirit took me,
And I am exalted in Israel
For all that I know I do not know.

Now the end of my desire is death
For my hour is almost come.
I shall not say with Sarah
That God hath made me to laugh,
Nor the new word shall not be born
Out of the dryness of my mouth.

Rabbi, let me go up from Egypt
With Moses to the wilderness of Sinai
And to the country of the old Canaan
Where, sweeter than honey, Sarah's blood
Darkens the cold cave in the field
And the wild seed of Abraham is cold.

A new volume of HOWARD NEMEROV's poetry, *Guide to the Ruins,* will be published by Random House in May. Mr. Nemerov was born in New York City in 1920, and graduated from Harvard in 1941.

RUDOLF BORCHARDT: POET OF ASSIMILATION

The Extreme Case of an Extreme Tendency

HEINZ POLITZER

THE death sentence pronounced (though never carried out) on Rudolf Borchardt by the Nazis (most incompetent of judges) recalls the tragic irony that hovers over some of Shakespeare's fools. They too know the loveliest songs, they too are something else—both more and less—than they appear, they too move in the word rather than in life, and leave the play without having taken part in its development, memorable ornaments but no more.

Rudolf Borchardt was the extreme case of an extreme tendency: a German poet of Jewish lineage, he staked the immense fund of his genius on his service to German culture at its most profound and most haughty. He refused to regard his origins as a problem to be solved, either by opposition or assent or even by an ambivalence which, oscillating between hate and love, might have enriched him. His Jewishness existed for him neither as a problem nor a curse. He simply denied it by effacing or repressing it. He was a great poet and a great liar, at once demoniac and pathological.

In 1931 he wrote in a hitherto unpublished letter to Max Brod: "It has been suggested that my Jewish forebears of the middle of the last century, who left the communal group and by baptism, choice of profession, and marriage signified their resolution to assimilate themselves, still determine me so greatly that I am unable to become what I want to be. I was born in a German home where the last trace of those memories had been lost (as a child I knew nothing whatever about them) and from the age of ten on was brought up in the family of a Prussian civil servant whose traditions became my own. All Jewish traditions, good and bad, any feeling of Jewish solidarity, let alone Jewish nationalism, when I encountered them later in life have seemed uncanny and repellent to me. . . ."

Borchardt was born in 1877 in Koenigsberg, East Prussia. The "Jewish forebears" whom he moves back into the middle of the last century were, in fact, his parents, or one of them. But we are not concerned here with an investigation of ancestry—that materialistic nonsense of barbarism. The Jewishness Borchardt abjured was too real to be proved by a family tree: he experienced it as destiny.

No matter how determined his ancestors were in their assimilation, no matter how Prussian and civil-servantish, austere and true-blue his education, there was in Rudolf Borchardt an unrest, an insecurity, and a straining for the unattainable that accorded ill with the superior, Prussian, conservative attitude he liked to affect. His performance was sufficiently great to leave its mark upon German culture. But he took too much upon himself, overshot his mark, so that there is about his severe and majestic verse the atmosphere of Don Quixote and Baron Munchausen. His death under Nazism restored the balance: tragedy, executed by crimi-

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THE life and work of the German poet Rudolf Borchardt is, HEINZ POLITZER suggests here, a symbol in its most extreme form of those many German Jewish men of letters who sought to integrate themselves in a culture that was never quite ready to accept them—and who, by the very violence of the rejection of their Jewish background, succeeded only in making their dilemma, and their ultimate moral and artistic failure, more poignant. Mr. Politzer has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY. Born in Vienna in 1910, he emigrated to Palestine in 1938 and came to this country two years ago. He is now a member of the department of German at Bryn Mawr. This article was translated from the German by F. C. Golffing.

nals, gave this man back his original destiny.

Rudolf Borchardt's life, he himself has told us, was dedicated to the rehabilitation of German poetry. "The history of my life has been the history of the collapse of the German tradition, and of one man's attempt to restore and reintegrate that tradition from its ruins. . . ." Yet what remains of him is an iridescent hue, the memory of a magnificent nuance, and not, as he would have had it, the impress of a real force.

His own awareness of his problematical personality goes back to childhood. Since he stylized himself, since he lacked the poise to look straight at himself in the mirror, he never completed his autobiography. Portions of that projected autobiography, however, which he published under the title *The Child at Home* (*Das Kind im Hause*), yield valuable insights. "I don't know how early, and still less whence, my childish imagination conceived the notion that I was something like an adopted child, that the name I bore wasn't mine by rights, and that I would one day meet my parents. . . . It might have been an amusing game, and in fact it wasn't exactly a distressing one, but it was based on the peculiar notion, which time strengthened, that I was alone in the world, as alone as Robinson Crusoe, almost as alone as Caspar Hauser, who was ignorant of his parents. . . ."

It is significant that these childhood dreams are associated with vacations which his parents took away from Koenigsberg, leaving the boy behind. "When my parents had gone the last bond with reality was broken. . . ." It was his parents who had sullied the dream of nobility, purity, and isolation, who made it almost impossible; the dream was to obliterate the memory of his origins.

The myth of a secret, strange birth, as it filled the boy's mind, set him apart, stamping him with the sign of election. (This same kind of heroic myth lately surrounded the caricature of a Hitler.) The myth Rudolf Borchardt wove about his life served another function: biographically it removed him from the context of Judaism. While his parents may have been baptized Jews wholly assimilated to their German environment, the son considered himself a foundling, a cuckoo's egg. He snapped the umbilical cord by which nature and destiny (as he knew only too well) tried to determine him. Artistically the myth endowed him with a sense of chosenness and with a seer's, almost a prophet's, mission.

In one of his early works, *Das Buch Joram,* Borchardt formulated the myth of his birth. A man leaves his home and his wife becomes a prostitute; after several years the man returns and learns of her unfaithfulness. He is turned in upon himself and through an examination of conscience attains a new power to command his destiny. After an immense struggle he takes his decision, in which volition plays a greater part than love: he lies with his wife and gets a son with her. "This child became the Master whose name is unknown and who is called a 'Messiah.'" Only under a special conjunction of the stars does the extraordinary enter the world of men: such is the message of *Das Buch Joram,* a message that Borchardt, unconsciously perhaps, conceived as symbolizing his own destiny.

In his own life too, the natural order is interrupted by a violent decision, a formidable act of will. The outcome is a man of superhuman proportions, a Messiah. In this tampering by man with the natural order of his life lies Borchardt's *hybris* and his tragedy.

Das Buch Joram is the first substantial document of the falsity that runs through Borchardt's life. This falsity is apparent not in the theme alone, which is built on a blasphemous concatenation of circumstances ingeniously constructed to make possible the conception and birth of a Messiah. In form, the work pretends to be something like an apocryphal book of the Old Testament. The pastiche is carried out in the smallest details: the narrative is divided into chapters and verses.

But there is discrepancy between the carefully thought-out and thoroughly modern plot of *Joram* and its pseudo-sacred style. To conceal the rift Borchardt introduces a décor that reminds us somewhat of Oscar Wilde's *Salome*. All is costume, scenic artifice, color, in the style of an early production by Max Reinhardt. Over everything lies an ice-cold sultriness. The new Messiah begotten here has more in common with Nietzsche's superman than with the shepherd of men of the New Testament.

And it was indeed the ideals of Nietzsche that determined Borchardt the poet. In politics these ideals led him to a Spartan imperiousness, an attitude which the sensitive and difficult man assumed so well that his milieu came at last to believe in it. He himself began very early to take his wish-projections for fact. It is the ancient prerogative of poets, even lesser ones than Borchardt, to merge illusion and reality, fantasy and life.

IT WAS thus that Borchardt became a poet and mouthpiece of the late Wilhelmian era, of Germany before the First World War. He possessed everything demanded by the Germany of that era: depth of erudition, scholarly arrogance, a poetic power at once hard and pliant that produced poems of steel-like brilliance. He possessed, moreover, the characteristic self-conscious uncertainty of modern man (needed after 1900 to command an audience), together with a contempt for all uncertainty that stamped him all the more clearly as a follower of Nietzsche. He was a lonely modern, anxious to maintain his loneliness, parading it as his shield and his weapon.

He was a poet's poet, writing for the elite rather than, as he pretended, for the whole German nation. *"Die Welt ist jedermanns"* begins a dedicatory epistle to Hugo von Hofmannsthal written in 1904:

Die Welt ist jedermanns: doch keiner weiss,
Als der ihr Bild hat, das Gesicht der Welt.
Es ist, und ist nicht. . . .

(The world is everyman's: yet no one knows the visage of the world but he who has its image. It is, and is not. . . .)

And only the poet and seer can communicate the symbol of the world, giving existence and form to what would otherwise remain nebulous.

Just as the poet is the true center of the universe (Borchardt was never able to free himself from the egocentric self-apotheosis of the poet fashionable around 1900), so the true center and meaning of all human existence is passion. *"Lebe; und es ist Passion,"* he wrote on the fly-leaf of a dedication copy of *Joram* for a younger poet. Yet what he called "passion" had little elemental in it. It signified a Promethean gesture toward the boundless rather than that readiness for self-abrogation which is the prerequisite of passion. When he built one of his most perfect sonnets around the Miltonic line, "They also serve who only stand and wait," he celebrated erudition and intellectual dignity rather than the experience of genuine humility. There is an air of tragic necessity about the fact that passion, the only thing that could have changed him and taken him outside himself, remained for him no more than a literary motif, no matter how various its disguises.

He lived in an ivory tower of gigantic proportions, from the battlements of which he commanded a view of the most distant countries and epochs. He was far-sighted. Whatever lay far off he saw clearly in every detail and with the most profound understanding of its complexity. But the closer the object of scrutiny lay, the more his vision blurred. Its contours melted and he stumbled again and again when it came to dealing with immediate reality.

THEN Borchardt renounced his solitude. He accepted invitations from the reactionary Herrenklub and consented to lecture at some of the most reactionary of German universities, becoming the most persuasive spokesman of the policies of post-Bismarckian imperialism. The First World War found him in uniform, and after the defeat he did not, like Hofmannsthal, see literature as the "spiritual realm of the nation," but saw the German nation as the fertile acre of the spirit, the whole human spirit.

He sensed the approach of National Socialism, which he welcomed as little as any other German conservative. He saw through Hitler, without recognizing the sinister force of the plebeian. He neither despised nor feared him. Perhaps his calculations included the poison of total barbarism as an antidote to other poisons. His attitude was that of the right wing, of big industry, of the old guard of the German officers' corps. He gave no thought to the special danger, personal as well as general, that the new movement implied for him as a Jew, and for all German Jews. He was not concerned with the sociological and psychological bases of German culture.

In 1933 he paid homage to Mussolini and interviewed him. He sent his report to the German press, which, though already in the process of "Aryan" *Gleichschaltung*, accepted eagerly and printed conspicuously this contribution from a Jew.

Yet this same man was, in the universality of his ever-ready memory, a German European, steeped in Greek myth, the translator of Dante as well as Swinburne, as Italianate as any German humanist, as ambivalent toward England as any German man of the world, and as indebted to the French decadent movement as any contemporaneous German poet.

Making common cause for at least part of the way with the best minds of his epoch, he soon diverged from them, fought them, falsified their image in his mind, crossed their path again and again without ever joining forces with them, and then, modeling himself on Dante, grew disaffected with his homeland and chose exile in Italy. This exile was voluntary until 1933. Yet no place could satisfy him completely, whether the Germany to which he was pledged, or the Italy whose cultural tradition he extolled in his essay "Villa" (setting the "Italy of our ancestors" against his caricature of modern Germany) and whose political activities he analyzed in the *Süddeutsche Monatshefte* before 1914 with great historical acuteness and to the invariable disadvantage of Germany.

BORCHARDT's critical mordancy, rarely wasted on trifling objects, had full play in his critique of Stefan George, his only peer in Germany, akin to him in some ways and in some ways superior. Judged on the strength of their respective endowments, Borchardt would appear infinitely more gifted —he, the German Jew, having a much surer command of the resources of the German language than the indigenous Rhinelander whom many consider the greatest German poet of his day.

Borchardt commanded almost too easily a wealth of lyric forms, both traditional ones and ones freely developed by him from the traditional. Borchardt's stanza is superior to George's in its rhythmic nuance within the line and its rhythmic progression. (Only rarely does George seem to have experienced the chaotic, elemental power of language.) Borchardt had, moreover, especially in his love poetry, a spiritual grace which severe discipline alone saved from wantonness and which well became so majestic a writer, giving his verse a mature freshness. He also possessed critical discrimination, which George seemed to despise. His gift for prose exposition, his emphatic wit, sometimes of a Latin elegance, sometimes of a German bluntness, enabled Borchardt to achieve effects for which the haughtier George had mostly relied on disciples like Gundolf.

Yet George *was* wholly what Borchardt strenuously tried to be. Like Borchardt a disciple of the French decadence, of the *Parnasse*, he too withdrew into isolation in order to become a poet, a leader of the young, a supreme arbiter of taste, a severe judge of his times. He conceived of his *cénacle* as the inner core of a rejuvenated, ennobled, spiritualized Germany. But it is one of the misfortunes of German poets that the magic wand tends to become the schoolmaster's birch in their hands, and George's leadership became something like a dictatorship over his followers. Whoever refused to submit was anathematized unless, like the great, sensitive Austrian, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, he had rejected George's advances from the start.

Rudolf Borchardt was at one time close to George's *cénacle,* but this led eventually to a furious feud, conducted with sheer venom by George's disciples and by Borchardt with a superior acerbity. Borchardt kept his intellect clear and vigilant, especially when the burden of proof and defence was upon him; and he never closed his eyes to the greatness of his adversary. His critique of George's later productions is a great example of analytical insight into the structure of poetry.

Yet George's was the true magic wand. Everything he touched came alive. A few lines in praise of a town or a human face achieved existence and attested to their creator's nobility. George's best poems, greater in penetration than melodic sweep, form part of a world of beauty, and under their cool and measured edifices murmurs the secret of true creation and growth. Even when George seemed to attack the muse by force in order to call down upon himself a blessing that was withheld, we still sense beneath the imperious gesture the poet's deep humility and his passionate dedication to the sovereignty of the spirit. Even his fragments bear the stamp of his genius. Entirely sure of himself, he attempted to justify neither his failures nor himself. Scion of German winegrowers, George trusted in the growth of the spirit as he did in the fruitfulness of the soil, even when the harvest was poor. All magic, even that of the modern artist, presupposes an awe of that which it is about to conjure. With all his *hauteur* and severity, Stefan George was filled with this awe of the spirit. He had experienced the mystery and knew himself able to summon it.

Rudolf Borchardt possessed every gift save the humility of the true creator and the power of poetic magic that it yields. What obstructed the pregnant depth of the unconscious was not only his critical intellect—though this was what made him feel his deficiency—but also that insecurity and isolation which he had felt as a boy, the myth of the extraordinary birth of the elected. He had enmeshed himself in the myth for so long that his creativity was eventually choked by it. He held himself born in a loftier home than his own, and felt that other blood than that of his parents flowed in his veins. But a terrible inversion took place: the legend of his election became a curse, an obsession with apartness. He was different from everyone else, different especially from George and Hugo von Hofmannsthal, his peers whom he both loved and feared, understood and misunderstood.* He was not a Casper Hauser in whom the human dignity of a child had been violated—whether the child was a prince or a child of the people. He was a pretender, a false Demetrius who arrogated to himself power and authority and whose particularity lay largely in his intemperance. It was his awareness that his pretensions were not wholly legitimate that drove him to virulence and lies. All that Borchardt felt, thought, and wrote was a lie, a noble, rich lie in the face of life and the spirit, however close it came to true poetry.

WHEN in 1908 a North German adventurer going by the name of Veltheim was sentenced to twenty years in the penitentiary by an English jury for the murder of a South African usurer, Borchardt published in a German newspaper a description of the man, whom he had once happened to meet. This haughty poet, who despised the press and everything sensational and journalistic, wasn't in the habit of exploiting current news stories. It is all the more surprising, therefore, that he twice included this sketch in representative selections of his work. True, the article is a masterpiece of expository prose, full of sap and intuition of a kind possible only because of the identification of the writer with his subject. Rudolf Borchardt brought to his study of this vagrant murderer an understanding that made him

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*Hofmannsthal too is a peculiar phenomenon: of Italian and Jewish origin, he represents one of the few successful cases of Jewish symbiosis with the Germans. But his host nation was the Austrians, themselves a motley of various races, nationalities, and languages, and moreover in an advanced state of decomposition. For Hofmannsthal symbiosis was not an act of the will but a *donnée,* a simple fact. His symbiosis took place in a ripe culture which could make use, at least for a time, of the Jewish component in him.

recognize his own destiny in every feature of the other man without obliging him to admit the symbolic likeness. Borchardt went so far as to raise the criminal to the plane of myth. On this plane the identification becomes complete: "Gradually what had been vague began to take on form; what had separated us from him ceased to be an airy phantom and became clear. He drew a deep breath and started lying. He kept it up like the liars of myth and fairy tale: cool, rich, improbable, out of an inexhaustible fund. In this stream the truth turned up from time to time, and we saw the evolution of myth into the beginnings of history."

In his study of this character who had, as it were, sat for him, a character at once naive and impressive, Borchardt revealed the cleavage in his own personality, which, unawares, he magnified to magnificent and primeval proportions. He stabilized the lie as the primal inchoate mass, the formless chaos out of which intellect and morality, order and truth have grown by painful, laborious stages. He continually sought for origins, the origins of his language and culture, and he ended by seeking not the origins but the primordial, pre-human condition that antedated them, so that he might lose in it his own origins. He loved legend because it preceded factual account, he loved myth because it preceded history, and he loved the lie because it formed the innermost core of his being.

"These lies," Borchardt continues in the essay on Veltheim, "had the effect of suggesting truths about the man which he did not tell and could not have told. Indeed, we experienced the truth of him more tellingly by means of them than we could have done through a straight story. Whatever he tossed off in his casual and defiant manner—designed rather to keep one at a distance than to draw one closer—was a web of Falstaffian, Cervantesque, Odyssean lies, but these lies conjured up from the deeps the very atmosphere of his world; they brought before our eyes the entire furnishings of his reckless fantasy and the complete data of his career. . . . And these lies seemed to us very much like the earliest documents of humanity, uncouth attempts, of little historical value, to express essential truths. They were fictitious as the beginnings of history are fictitious, like those lies that are older than truth—that child of maturity, of late and difficult birth."

The German Jew was not content to have become a Prussian and a Christian: he was driven to go farther and deeper, into the pre-Christian, in order to document himself and his falsity. With his concern for primeval forces and drives, for a primitive *élan vital*, Borchardt placed himself in dangerous proximity to such trail-blazers of Fascism as Gabriele d'Annunzio. Borchardt sought the pre-Christian era because Christianity still contained elements of that Judaism he wished to escape. He went farther yet when he tried to separate the New Testament from the Old in order to rid himself of the tenets of Jewish ethics. To lighten his own guilt he minimized, with the superior gestures and authority of science, the Jewish contribution to human history as manifested in the genesis of Christianity. Here we find him once more in questionable company. A number of the official theologians and philosophers of Nazi Germany made a similar attempt to "Aryanize" the New Testament and its doctrine.

In a speech Borchardt made at the University of Kiel on the two-thousandth anniversary of Virgil's birth, he proclaimed boldly: "Christianity did not only originate in the single place and time of its origin. It came into being after it had been spread abroad sufficiently to come into being." And again, this time more precisely: "Christianity came into the world in the shape of a small local event in a small nation, in Palestine. It was clothed in alien shreds which fell from it as soon as they had performed their function—to enable the new spirit to insinuate itself into the firm structure of the great nations." And again: "Each of the ancient nations entered into the small vanguard of believers in the Good (notwithstanding the daily victories of Evil) under its own aegis. The notion that all of them indifferently harked back to the lore of Moses and the

Prophets in order to prepare themselves for the Gospel does not stand up any longer under historical scrutiny. . . ."

As he had once denied his home and the parenthood of his parents, he now denied the group from which he sprang. In order to insure his own freedom, independence, and nobility in the eyes of posterity, he reduced Judaism to the significance of "a small nation, in Palestine" and tried to ignore the fact that it had given birth to the Christianity he professed but which brought him neither peace nor humility.

AND what of his language, his beloved German? It is true that he embraced it in all its nuances and transitions, in all the richness of its linguistic and historical associations, and with an instinctive and unequalled command of ancient ways of speech and rhetoric. But here again he felt compelled to go beyond the limits of the possible and permissible: he was driven backwards unceasingly until once more he dissolved the existing forms and replaced them by a fantastic invention, still another chaotic lie. In outward demeanor Rudolf Borchardt was a conservative gentleman, a Prussian and Christian, yet a deep impulse in him made him shatter established forms and show himself not so much a revolutionary as a nihilist.

He translated Dante's *Divina Commedia* into a German idiom of his own devising. "I've attempted to let an older German shine through, and to find a language that doesn't exist," he writes and then adds, speaking of the labor it cost him, "It was like a ceaseless grinding of granite." He tried to translate the ancient Italian poem into the kind of German contemporary with it, and since he thought that the 14th century furnished not enough poetic documents in German, he was forced to use his linguistic imagination.

There is nothing unusual in a poet's not finding an adequate linguistic substance for his literary projects. A revolution of this kind is usually the sign of a mind eager to rejuvenate its means of expression, and we have a recent example of this process in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. The intention of the Irishman resembles that of the German Jew. He too went in search of the magmatic, fiery, fluid primeval condition of language in order to shape a specific vision that could not be rendered otherwise. But the difference lies in the fact that while Joyce wanted to give adequate expression in language to modern experience, Borchardt was looking for a trump to end the game. While Joyce was free to project his uniqueness, Borchardt, as translator, should have subordinated himself to his great original. The labor of both men reveals the alienation of the modern writer from the public, with whom, out of a kind of desperate pride, he refuses to communicate. But *Finnegans Wake* eventually reveals itself to the reader, and in its exuberant linguistic fantasy conveys a kind of beauty, whereas Borchardt remains incomprehensible, and his translation undecipherable even when we compare it with the Italian original. Joyce's language is a natural rebellion against tradition and aims at the renewal of man and his world. Borchardt's Dante represents a hysterical reversion to a factitious past; it serves, not the majesty of the original, but the translator's escape from himself. Joyce was seeking a truth, however involved and difficult of communication; Borchardt's Dante was prompted by a mendacious vanity.

IT WILL have become clear by now that Rudolf Borchardt's falseness can scarcely be stated and judged in purely moral terms. In its fertility and variousness and in the tensions set up between itself and a truth known or guessed by the poet, it represents a magnificent and sinister phenomenon of the modern mind. If we assume that Borchardt's Jewishness was the original trauma that prompted him to lie and to write, and yet stuck in his mind as the goad of truth, then his work appears as the *ne plus ultra* of German-Jewish assimilation at its most problematical.

He was perfectly aware what a poet was, and what his role was in the culture of his nation—particularly a nation so close-knit, so jeopardized by its own intransigence as Germany. "It would be erroneous to assume that a poet can live in a national vacuum. . . . A poet rests as solidly upon the passional and volitional aspects of his culture and generation as a jewel on the mineral in which it is embedded and in which its own hues are already faintly visible: how he comes to be there is enough of a mystery to account for his solitude."

He regarded himself as a great national German poet, or rather he tried over and over, with much dignified and plausible eloquence, to establish himself as such. But quite apart from his own problems, was he not surrounded by the problems of the Germans themselves, who oscillate between philosophy and aggression, music and militarism? Was he not in fact living in a vacuum which precluded his being what he wanted to be? Not himself a German, he presupposed a Germany that never existed. To balance his own lie and maintain his equilibrium he had to invent a wholly imaginary milieu into which he could infuse his own values.

He created and acted the part of a general of the German spirit—something no Prussian Junker would have attempted. "My task is simply to hold the strategic position to which both our national and my personal history have assigned me, i.e., to defend the tradition of the German mind in the European nexus with all means at my disposal." This German Jew invented a marriage of militarism and intellectuality. Yet when it came to defending that tradition against rising barbarism in Germany, he characterized National Socialism as "a popular movement of vast proportions, the greatest in Germany since the Reformation, a wholly incalculable elemental power, which only a fool can gainsay."

NEITHER his dignity nor the importance of his work prevented his arrest by the Nazis when, in 1944, they tracked him down in Italy. He had been living for over thirty years in Lucca. Now he was escorted northward. The letter carried by his escort contained Borchardt's death warrant. At Sterzing in the Tyrol he was put in a camp. The camp commandant refused to liquidate the old man and tore up the warrant. The man he spared was dying anyhow.

Borchardt's last poem has been preserved. It is a Christmas poem. It reads: "We have no candles/ Only a sombre tree. . . ./ We have no Bible/ To read the message from . . . ." But "the candle is not the light/ The writing not the promise. . . the Right will not remain/ With the dark and insolent ones. . . ." However "the night might be poor/ But rich is the bright spirit."

In stanzas the great master of forms seems to have borrowed from an old German hymn, he tells of the deep humiliation that has befallen him. It is as though a hand were on his throat, stifling everything but a single, crystal-clear sigh. When *the German* was upon him in its most brutal shape, did he become a Jew then? Or did he, thus humiliated, become a Christian? Did the Spirit finally redeem him from chaos, the approach of death from the lie that was his life? We do not know.

Rudolf Borchardt died on January 15, 1945. His death, after he had been pardoned by murderers who were actually little else than the executors on a primitive level of his own political ideas, crowns his career with a tragic irony: the extreme irony of an extreme Jewish destiny. In the end his roots proved stronger than all those forces in him that had tried to assert themselves by denying their origin.

Rudolf Borchardt played a lone hand. He went as far as it is possible to go in mimicry, dissimulation, and abrogation of all one's natural and spiritual antecedents. But he was not the only one.

On a somewhat lower level the career of another German-Jewish poet, Ernst Lissauer, resembles his. This Prussian achieved fame overnight with a war poem whose refrain and motto, *"Gott strafe England,"* was used again and again during the First World War for propaganda purposes in Germany and Austria. Lissauer considered the dramas he wrote, which had for their heroes great leaders of the army and the Protestant church, as his most significant works. National Socialism caught up with him in Vienna after the Anschluss in 1938. (Lissauer, like Borchardt unable to endure life in Prussia, had made Austria his adopted home.) While persecuted by the Nazis, the sick and aging man wrote a number of contemplative and self-accusing lyrics that stemmed from a kind of metaphysical blues. These late pieces constitute the only portion of Lissauer's literary output that lives up to the demands of great poetry.

Fundamentally, figures like Borchardt and Lissauer are simply dramatic instances of a general tendency of character, latent in all cases of assimilation, including the German-Jewish. They represent a peculiar readiness, compounded of courage, shamelessness, and historical blindness, to dream to the logical end, to convert into reality the wish-dream that all who are placed in a similar position dream. However, it is the nature of dreams to founder on the reality they attempt to replace. The work of Rudolf Borchardt would have remained a heroic, that of Ernst Lissauer a tragi-comic, fragment, even if European history had not hewn them to pieces.

Borchardt and Lissauer joined German culture as Prussian soldiers joined the Wehrmacht. They left the whole man behind. They made every effort to be like the others. But culture has its own whims: it doesn't tolerate uniformity, sooner or later it sheds it.

These poets renounced the reciprocating possibilities, the dialectics of assimilation; by denying their Jewishness they deprived German culture of their fertilizing gifts. They should have loved where, instead, they lied.

SCENE WITH FIGURE

BABETTE DEUTSCH

The treadmill prisoner of that century
Whose sufferings seem quaint beside our own
Ground corn, ground stone. With steady tramping, she,
Repeating her gray round, grinds misery.
A choking heap, that she must eat alone.
Awake, asleep, she walks, she walks, she treads
The steps her crippled feet have worn. The crime
She pays for is a secret learned heads
Have not deciphered. But the few tears she sheds
Are salt as blood. Her heart burns like lime,
Destroyed shriveled joy's long raveled threads.
She watches now the dying of her child
Whose life was empty as statistics are,
And all its broken furniture is piled
Beside her treadmill. This place is not wild.
It is a known spot on an unknown star.

Babette Deutsch has published several volumes of poetry and has also written novels, juvenile books, and criticism. Miss Deutsch is at present lecturing at Columbia University and is working on a critical study of modern poetry.

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE PEANUT MACHINE AND THE KRAMERS

The Case of the Unexpected Pennies

LOUIS ZARA

PROMPTLY at five minutes to six each evening Papa Kramer pushed open the gate to the yard, came wearily down the broken walk, climbed the porch stairs, opened the screen door, set down his lunchbox, and asked, "Supper ready?" It would take him fully ten minutes to remove his coat and cap, wash his hands and face, and enter the kitchen, but supper had to be ready when he appeared, and each member of his family in place at the round golden oak table.

This evening, as he sat down to his meal, all the children were present except Harry, the middle son.

Papa Kramer muttered his prayer over the rye bread, broke a piece, and chewed on the good side of his teeth. Then he passed the plate and, without raising his eyes, murmured, "Everybody is here?"

"It's Harry," said Mama Kramer.

"He's not here," he declared soberly.

That was all he said, but his eyes darkled. He ate his soup with the matzoh ball and then the meat cooked with carrots and potatoes, and was sipping his glass of hot tea when the back door opened and, with a thump that fairly shook the little house, Harry fell in. That was his way. He never went down a staircase, he hurtled himself down. Mama Kramer said he was the only creature she had ever seen who could fall up a flight of stairs.

Now he bounced into the kitchen, went pale at the sight of everyone already sipping tea, and quietly dropped into his chair. Panting, he lowered his head and waited while Mama Kramer, without a word, went to the stove to prepare his plate.

PAPA Kramer sucked a mouthful of tea through the piece of sugar in his teeth, set his glass down, and declared to no one in particular, "The door opens, and in comes a stranger. He does not say 'Good morning!' or 'Good evening!' or 'How are you?' He pulls out a chair, sits down, and eats."

Mama Kramer put the plate before Harry. "The boy is hungry. Aren't you hungry, Harry?"

Attacking the soup, Harry nodded vigorously.

"He is hungry," the father remarked solemnly. "All day long he runs around. Why should he not be hungry? His stomach shakes up and down and becomes empty. Hungry? He is famished! But how does he sit down? Does he wash? Who eats without washing? Look at those hands, the fingernails! A pig eats without washing."

IN THIS department, informal sociologists have explored the impact of American society, its modes and its machines, on the Jewish family, its cultural patterns, and its various members—and *vice versa.* In this story, not at all sociological and even more informal, some will find themselves even further enlightened on this absorbing theme. LOUIS ZARA is the author of several novels and a number of short stories. His most recent novel is *Ruth Middleton,* published by Creative Age in 1946. Born in New York City in 1910, Mr. Zara is now secretary of the Chicago Executive Committee of the Anti-Defamation League and a supervisory editor of several new magazines to be published this year by the Ziff-Davis Publishing Company.

"My children are not pigs!" snapped Mama Kramer.

"Ha, that is what we have always believed. Their grandparents were not pigs, their parents are not pigs. Then why should he eat like a pig? Only a pig eats without washing."

Harry spooned up the last drop of soup and reached for the bread.

That instant Papa Kramer's hand shot out and struck his wrist. "Go wash!" he bellowed.

Like a deer Harry leaped from the table and swerved toward the sink. Energetically he snatched at the soap and lathered his fingers, the backs of his wrists and up to his sleeves. Papa Kramer glowered at his family. Normally a mild man, he was considerably bewildered by the volume he commanded when he raised his voice. Since he always counseled gentleness he felt guilty, and now tried to stare everyone down to confirm his authority.

"When I was a child," said Mama Kramer, as though to herself, "no one let out a holler in the house."

"When you were a child," he retorted, "times were different. They washed before eating."

That moment Harry slipped back into his chair. As he did there was a clatter, and coins spilled from his pocket to the floor. Hastily he bent down and scrambled underneath the tablecloth to pick up the objects.

His father shrugged. "It rang like money."

Harry was crimson. He dug fiercely at a potato and crammed it into his mouth.

"I say it was money."

HARRY was silent. He ate as though the truant officer were after him.

"Your father says it was money," Mama Kramer urged.

"Pennies!" Harry finally gasped, and stuffed himself with a gobbet of meat.

"He says it's pennies."

"That was not one penny," the man meditated aloud. "It was not one penny that a boy may get to buy a candy or chewing gum. It was not three or four pennies that a boy may save if his tooth is not too sweet."

"Those were many pennies," Mama Kramer addressed her middle son.

But still Harry would not reply. To help him gain time she rose to fetch his tea.

"This is a mystery," said the head of the household. "Has he gone to the bank and drawn out the savings he does not have? Did someone stop him on the street and say, 'Here, I have too much, take from me a bundle of pennies?'" Again he raised his voice to that auditorium volume that shook the ice in the old icebox. "Where did you get the pennies?"

"From a machine," Harry muttered.

The man smiled grimly. "You see, wife mine, what a wonderful country this is, and what a fortunate son we have? For thirty years I have been in this country. After all, I am not a man who has not seen machines. I have not built them, but I have watched them. I have even worked with them. But a machine that gives pennies that I have not yet seen."

"What kind of a machine is it, Harry?" the mother asked.

"A peanut machine," he replied in a hollow voice.

"A peanut machine? You mean a machine that gives peanuts?"

He nodded.

"He means a machine in which you put a penny in a slot," Seymour, the oldest son, explained. "You turn a handle, and peanuts come out."

PAPA Kramer regarded him stonily. "I have not asked you. He has a tongue, let him talk. He knows of a machine that gives pennies. Why should it be a secret? I am a hard-working man, let him tell me. I, too, will go to the machine and get pennies."

At last Harry was ready to talk. "It's the peanut machine near the Orpheus picture theater. You put in a penny and out comes peanuts. I like peanuts."

"He likes peanuts," said Mama Kramer. "Is there any harm that he likes peanuts?"

Her husband struck the table with the flat of his hand. "I have not said anything against peanuts! I do not have my own teeth, so *I* do not eat peanuts. But I have watched people eat peanuts."

"They're very good," Seymour again offered.

"Who said peanuts is bad?" he shouted. "All I want to know is how is it that for everybody in the world when they put a penny in it gives peanuts, and for him when he puts a penny in it gives pennies?"

"Shh!" said the mother. "Let the boy talk."

"I am keeping him from talking?"

"I'll talk," Harry went on eagerly. "It's a good machine."

"A good machine!" the man rolled his eyes. "What could be bad about such a machine?"

"I mean that it gives a lot of peanuts, and I always go there. Some machines give only ten or twelve peanuts!"

"It's true," Seymour corroborated.

"On this one if you turn the handle it gives maybe sixteen peanuts."

"But you gave the handle a good turn. Ha, he gave the handle a good turn, and out came pennies!"

"That's right, Pa."

"How many pennies did you get?"

"I don't know."

"Listen to him. He finds a machine that gives pennies, but he doesn't know how many pennies he's got. Empty out the pockets."

Reluctantly Harry pulled out his loot. He had pennies in his righthand pocket, pennies in his lefthand pocket, and even pennies in his back pocket. Everyone was silent as Papa Kramer reached over and quietly made little heaps of five pennies.

"Look! This is something to see!" he declared. "Look at this, eighty-seven pennies. A wonderful machine."

"What do you want from him?" Mama Kramer protested. "Is it his fault that the machine gives pennies?"

He glared. "I have not said it is his fault. Who has said that it is his fault? I say only that a machine that gives eighty-seven pennies is a machine for people to see."

"I think it got too full," Harry volunteered. "It got crammed so full of pennies that some got into the place where they keep the peanuts. They should fix that machine."

"You think your son is a boy?" the man addressed his wife. "Your son is a man. He speaks wisdom. He knows that if a peanut machine gives pennies, there is something wrong. It should be fixed. Did you tell anybody to fix it?"

Harry lowered his eyes.

"Your father asks did you tell anyone to fix it?"

"No."

"Why?"

"There was no one there. The peanut man comes once a week. I think he comes tomorrow."

Papa Kramer rubbed his hand over his eyes. "Then tomorrow you will go and tell the man."

Harry was silent.

"Your father says tomorrow you will go and tell the man. Do you hear?"

"Yes, Ma."

"And tomorrow you will give the man the eighty-seven pennies."

Harry growled. "One belongs to me!"

"Then tomorrow you will give the man eighty-six pennies. Do you hear?"

"Yes, Pa."

Papa Kramer pushed the pennies back to Harry and dusted his hands. "It's other people's money. Take good care of it."

Quickly Harry gathered up the coins and thrust them into his righthand pocket, his lefthand pocket, and his back pocket.

"I used to hear that in America people found gold in the street, but this is the first time I have heard of machines that give pennies."

Harry swallowed his tea. "I'll fix the cord on the big lamp if you want, Ma!" he declared, and so escaped.

The following evening Harry was at the table long before his father appeared. The supper dish, after the soup was served, was potato pancakes and applesauce, so no one spoke as long as Mama Kramer, working feverishly at the stove, continued to serve the hot golden pancakes. With homemade applesauce, slightly chilled, there is nothing in the world like potato pancakes. Papa Kramer, who preferred cinnamon and sugar on his, proceeded slowly, savoring the crisp edges and smiling at his wife.

When the tea was served, he sighed and glanced askance at his middle son.

"What did the man say?" he asked calmly.

Harry sat up. "He didn't come."

Papa Kramer blew on his saucer of tea. "Every week he comes, but today he did not come."

"He didn't come while the boy was there."

"That's right!" Harry burst out. "I went right after school. I waited until it got dark, but he didn't come."

"Maybe he came earlier. After all, he didn't know you were waiting for him."

Harry drank his tea industriously.

"Where are the eighty-seven pennies?"

"Eighty-*six!*"

"Your father wants to know, Harry."

"I got them."

"And the machine," Papa Kramer went on slyly, "still gives pennies?"

"Today it gave a few peanuts, too."

"Ha, then you tried it again!"

Harry blanched. "I had to try it, Pa. Suppose it was fixed already?"

"And you got more pennies?"

"It wasn't fixed yet."

"How many?"

Harry splashed hot tea on his shirt.

"He's scalded!" his mother exclaimed. Tenderly she daubed at him with a dish towel. "You get him excited, and he scalds himself."

"I get him excited," Papa Kramer shut his eyes. "The pennies get him excited."

"I'm all right, Ma."

"He's all right."

"Sure, he's all right," she pouted. "But he could have burned himself."

"I think he burned himself on the peanut machine." He raised his voice to a thunderous roar: "How many pennies?"

"Forty-six."

"That machine is growing weak already."

"Maybe other people are taking out pennies, too," Mama Kramer countered.

"I don't care about other people. Other people do not belong to me. So when will you tell the man?"

"Tomorrow—if he comes."

Papa Kramer chortled grimly. "It will be Yom Kippur before you tell him." He raised his eyes to his wife. "Tomorrow *you* will go."

"I?" she protested. "What have I to do with a peanuts machine?"

"Go!"

She shrugged. "When do I eat peanuts?"

"Go," he insisted.

"I'll go," she muttered.

The following evening Papa Kramer had not put a spoon to his soup before he asked, "And the man?"

"He came, he came," she grumbled.

"And—"

"He didn't believe me."

Harry bowed his head.

"And who can blame him?" His father nodded to himself.

"The man turned the handle, and peanuts came out. I turned the handle, and peanuts came out. Only when Harry turned the handle did pennies come out."

Papa Kramer snickered. "Have I not said we have blessed children? But the man was grateful. He thanked you."

"He called me a crook," she replied sadly.

He grew pale. "What is this? A hooligan, a man?"

"A common sort, with a red neck and eyes like the black beads on my old dress, the one that my deaf Aunt Bessie sent me."

"How could a man call you a crook?" He shook his head perplexedly.

"He said he'd call the police."

Papa Kramer stroked his cheek. "We want no trouble with the police."

"He said that for three weeks he has been finding less and less pennies. He put in the same peanuts but out came less pennies. He figured up I should give him five dollars."

He shuddered. "You!"

"I am the mother of the boy."

"Then you should have given him the pennies and gone away."

She set her jaw. "He calls me a crook, and I should give him pennies?"

"But the boy had eighty-six and—how many more?—forty-six."

"And I should give them all to him when he opens up a big mouth on me?"

He was baffled. "So what did you do, Mama?"

"I told him to be ashamed. I told him to close his big mouth. I told him—never mind what I told him. I am not a greenhorn. A man like that gets nothing from Goldie Kramer."

He sighed. "And so it remains."

Harry spoke up brightly. "No, he took the machine away."

Resignedly Papa Kramer tasted his soup. "It's cold."

"I'll give you warm."

He turned to his middle son. "And the pennies?"

The boy avoided his eyes.

"Your father asks about the pennies."

"Some I lost," Harry quavered.

"Some he lost!" he mocked. "He has a fist like a safe in a bank, but now he has lost the pennies."

Mama Kramer set a fresh plate of hot soup before him. "So now you are speaking up for the big mouth with his red neck and his eyes like beads. He called me a crook, and you speak for him."

"I do not speak for him. I speak for our son, the banker, the merchant. What has he done with the pennies?"

"What have you done with the pennies? Your father is talking."

With a growl Harry began to empty his pockets. But though he searched in his righthand pocket, in his lefthand pocket, and in his back pocket, he could find no more than twenty-three pennies.

Papa Kramer grew wroth. "And that is all?"

"He says he lost them!"

With a regal gesture Papa Kramer waved his son to the metal charity-box that was nailed to the wall under the calendar from Rabinovich's Kosher Meat Market. "Into the *pushke*!"

"Pa!"

"I said, 'Into the *pushke*!' "

"Ma!"

"He said, 'Into the *pushke*!' "

On leaden feet Harry arose. Deliberately he moved to the box and dramatically, one by one, he pushed the pennies through the slot. Each ring and clang made him shiver.

"At least," said his father when Harry was done, "the poor will enjoy this money."

"If you had seen that big mouth with his red neck you would have said worse than I did."

He ignored her. "Is that all we are having for supper?" he asked mildly. "After a hard day all I get is only soup?"

With a toss of her head she marched to the stove to fetch the meat and potatoes.

Eagerly Harry stepped over to help her. As he turned, his brothers saw his pocket bulging. With a frown Seymour silenced Dave. Mama Kramer traced their glances and she, too, observed what he had seen. But their father, reaching for the bread, was mumbling, "Can a man make a meal on soup?" He alone did not see the shining white baseball. It was an official big-league baseball, brand new.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE CREATION

Selections from the Sefer Ha-Aggada

THE Aggada is made up of stories, dialogues, homilies, sayings, proverbs, fables, and riddles scattered through the Mishna and the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, as well as other sources. The Bialik-Ravnitzky edition of the Aggada, which appeared in six volumes from 1908 onwards, and from which this translation was made, was the fruit of research into the numerous traditional collections of Aggadic sayings by the famous Hebrew poet and his scholarly patron. It was created with the needs of the modern Hebrew-reading and Hebrew-speaking generation in mind and intended as a popular, literary folk-collection rather than an archeological or scholarly monument. It has proved itself one of the most popular books in the Hebrew-reading world. The selections given below have been translated by Hilda Auerbach.

GOD CREATED (Gen. 1:1).

Once an unbeliever came and said to Rabbi Akiba: Who was it that created the world? Said he to him: The Holy One, Blessed Be He. Said he: Give me a clear proof. Said he to him: Come to me tomorrow. On the morrow he came to him. Said Rabbi Akiba to him: What are you wearing? Said he to him: A garment. Said he: Who made it? Said he to him: A weaver. Said he: I do not believe you; give me clear proof. Said he to ~~him: A garment. Said he: Who made it?~~ know that a weaver made it? Said he: And you, do you not know that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the world? The unbeliever departed. Said his pupils to him: What is the proof? Said he to them: My sons, just as the house proclaims the builder, and the garment proclaims the weaver, and the door proclaims the carpenter, so the world proclaims the Holy One, Blessed be He, who created it. . . .

Said Master Zutra bar Tovia: The world was created on ten things: on wisdom, on understanding, and on knowledge, on strength, on reproof, and on courage, on justice and righteousness, on kindness and mercy.

IN THE DAY THAT THE LORD GOD MADE THE EARTH AND THE HEAVENS (Gen. 2:4).

This may be compared to a king who owned some fragile goblets. Said the king: If I put hot water in them, they burst, if cold, they contract. What did he do? He mixed hot water with cold and poured it into them and they stood firm. So the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: If I create the world solely on the principle of mercy, its sins will be many; if on the principle of justice, how will the world survive? But I am creating it on the principle of justice together with the principle of mercy—and may it endure.

AND THE EARTH WAS WITHOUT FORM (Gen. 1:2).

Rabbi Abahu said: This may be likened to a king who bought two slaves, both with the same bond and at the same price; he commanded that one of them be fed from the king's treasury and that the other one eat the fruit of his labor. This last sat bewildered and astonished and said: The two of us were bought on the same bond for the same price, the one is fed from the king's treasury and I must eat the fruit of my labor. How strange! Thus the earth sat bewildered and astonished and said: The upper and the lower [spheres] were built at the same time, the upper ones are nourished by the radiance of the Divine Presence, and the lower ones cannot eat except if they toil. How strange!

Rabbi Yehuda bar Simon said: This may

be likened to a king who bought himself two maidservants, both on a single bond and for the same price; the one was commanded not to stir out of the palace, while the other one was sent away. This last sat by herself, bewildered and astonished and said: We were both on the same bond, for the same price, but she never stirred out of the palace, while I was sent away. How strange! In this way the earth sat by itself, bewildered and astonished and said: The upper and lower [spheres] were created at the same time; the upper ones are alive and the lower ones are dead. Hence—"And the earth was without form. . . ."

Said Rabbi Tanchuma: This may be likened to a king's son who used to sleep in a cradle, and his nurse was confused and bewildered. For what reason? Because she knew that in the future she would receive punishment at his hands. Thus the earth waited for the future when it would receive its punishment at the hands of Adam, for it is said: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake" (Gen. 3:17). Hence, "And the earth was without form."

And god said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters (Gen. 1:6).

They said: When the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters," the middle drop [of water] congealed and thus the lower heavens and the upper heavens were formed.

And god called the firmament heaven (Gen. 1:8).

Said Rav: Fire and water. The Holy One, Blessed be He, took fire and water and mixed them and made the heavens out of them. Moreover, this was in order that people might marvel over them, saying: What are they made of? Out of fire, or out of water? How strange!

And god said, let there be light (Gen. 1:3).

Rabbi Yehuda said: The light was created first and the world afterwards. Like a king who wished to build a palace and the place was dark. What did he do? He lit candles and lamps so that he would know how to lay his foundation stones. Thus the light was created first. . . .

Rabbi Nehemiah said: The world was built first: like a king who built a palace and crowned it with candles and lamps. . . .

Rabbi Shimon ben Yehozadak asked Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman: As I have heard that you are a master of Aggada, whence was the light created? Said he to him: The Holy One, Blessed be He, draped himself in a white praying-shawl and let His glory radiate from one end of the world to the other.

And god divided the waters (Gen. 1:7).

An unbeliever asked Rabbi Meier: Is it possible that the upper waters depend merely on the divine command? Said he: Yea. Then he said to him: Bring me a water-clock. . . . and he brought him a water-clock, whereupon he set upon it a filling of gold, and the water was not held back; he set upon it a filling of silver, and the water was not held back; but when he set his finger upon it, the waters were held back. Said he to him: So you use your finger for that! . . . And what am I, that am merely flesh and blood? Yet my finger stops the waters—how much the more so can the finger of the Holy One, Blessed be He.

On the third day the earth was a flat tableland like a plain and the water covered all of the earth and when the utterance went forth from the mouth of the Holy One, Blessed be He: "Let the waters . . . be gathered together," mountains and hills rose up from the ends of the earth and separated themselves over the face of the earth and formed many valleys. The middle of the earth rose up and the waters rolled back and were gathered into valleys (and became seas). The waters were lifted up forthwith and rose up to cover the earth as at the beginning, until the Holy One, Blessed be He, rebuked them and overcame them and subdued them beneath the soles of his feet and measured them with the hollow of his hand, so that they would not increase or diminish, and He made the sand the limit of the sea, like a man who puts up a fence around his vineyard. And when the waters rise up and see the sand in front of them—they return whence they came.

Rav Asi compared the following texts: it is said "And the earth brought forth grass" (Gen. 1:12) on the third day before the Sabbath; and it is said "And every plant of the field before it was *in* the earth" (Gen.

2:5) on the Sabbath eve! This teaches that the grasses came up and stayed at the surface of the earth, until the first man came and asked for pity on them and the rains fell and they grew.

Rabbi Simon said: There is no grass without its guardian angel [lucky star] in the sky, which drives it saying: Grow!

RABBI Shimon ben Pazi compares the following: "And God made two great lights" (Gen. 2:16) and it is said "the greater light . . . and the lesser light." Said the moon to the Holy One, Blessed be He; Lord of the Universe, is it possible for two kings to use a single crown? Said he to her: Go and diminish yourself. Said she: Lord of the Universe, is it because I have said something unworthy that I must diminish myself? Said he to her: Go then and govern both by day and by night.

HE MADE THE STARS ALSO (Gen. 1:16).

Said Rabbi Acha: this may be likened to a king who had two administrators, one governing in the city and the other governing in the state. Said the king: Since this one diminished himself to the point of governing the city, I sentence him as follows: when he goes out, let him be accompanied both by members of the aristocracy and the common people, and when he goes in, let him be accompanied both by the aristocracy and the common people. So the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Since the moon has diminished herself to the point of only ruling over the city, I decree that when she comes out, the stars must come out with her, and when she goes in, the stars will go in with her.

When the Holy One, Blessed be He, rebuked the moon, she fell, and sparks fell from her all over the firmament and they are the stars.

AND ALL THE HOST OF THEM (Gen. 2:1).

Even those things which seem to you to be superfluous in the world, such as flies, fleas, and gnats, they too are included in the creatures of the world: through them all does the Holy One, Blessed be He, accomplish His purpose, even by means of a frog, even by means of a mosquito.

ON THE HORIZON

A MUSICIAN SPEAKS OUT

Jewish Music and Its Audience

CHEMJO VINAVER

ONE of the interesting effects of the creation of the State of Israel has been the sudden and frantic search for a "re-orientation" and a "new program" for Jewish life in America. So far, however, the quest for the Holy Grail of a "positive Jewish life" has produced nothing more than programmatic truisms whose only merit is that they at least publicly recognize the need of intensified cultural activity. High on the agenda—and there by universal acclaim—is *musical creativity*.

COMMENTARY, at least, has been taking the problem seriously, as we can see from two of the articles that appeared in its pages in the past year: Kurt List's review of "A Year of Jewish Music" (February 1949) and Peter Gradenwitz's comments on "Israeli Music in America" (July 1949). Both contributions deserve to be read and discussed with careful attention, and by no means solely because of their bearing upon Jewish music. Indeed, their chief significance lies precisely in the fact that, through a serious consideration of Jewish music, the whole pattern of Jewish cultural life in America is laid bare. Consciously, or otherwise, these articles vouchsafe us relevant insights into the sociological and cultural framework of American Jewry.

Dr. Gradenwitz's reaction, as a newcomer to our shores, is one of shock; Dr. List is considerably more matter-of-fact. One might venture to say, however, that had Dr. Gradenwitz stayed here longer his sense of shock would have dwindled to one of modest chagrin.

DR. LIST'S is the first report on Jewish musical life that I know of which does not mince words and is not afraid to tell the sad truth. Certainly, it needed singular courage on his part to speak out in so forthright a fashion—and at a time when most reviewers mouth asinine praise of the trash being served up to the Jewish public in concert halls and synagogues.

It is a strange but characteristic development of American Jewish cultural life that the longer such mediocre concerts as Dr. List describes go on being given, the more they deteriorate—both in program and performance. The apparatus of acclamation having been organized in advance and the audience guaranteed by pre-arrangement, nothing remains to halt the process of degeneration. If a trace of music can still be heard in the first year of such "festivals," in their fifth not even an echo will remain.

As Dr. Gradenwitz indicated, the case is very similar with respect to Israeli music in

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CHEMJO VINAVER has won the high respect of American critics and audiences alike for his devotion to the highest standards of musicianship as displayed in the performances of the Vinaver Chorus, of which he is organizer and conductor. His choral group has been heard in concerts of Jewish and other choral music in New York and nationally during the last two seasons. He was born in Warsaw in 1900, studied in Berlin, and has conducted choral music in Germany—where he was choirmaster of the Berlin Jewish community for ten years—Palestine, and throughout Europe. Mr. Vinaver is the composer of *The Seventh Day*, a Sabbath eve service, and is now at work on a Sabbath morning service.

this country. There seems to be a peculiar fatality by which we get only the cheapest music from Israel, though that is one place, at least, where *some* worthwhile music can still be found. And now the astounding choice of "experts" recently despatched to Israel by various organizations promises to enrich us with still another inferior crop of "Israeli" music.

Cheap cultural products have a way of proliferating, as though on a yeast base. If the caliber of artistic creation does not improve steadily, it begins immediately to degenerate. There is no compromise. Under the circumstances, the only honest thing that the critic of Jewish music can do today is denounce the incompetence of the organizers of the many "festivals" and expose their work for what it truly is. Such a task of enlightenment is an essential preliminary to further progress.

Nor will we be saved by the many conferences constantly being held "to raise the standards of Jewish music." One gains not the slightest impression, from all their speeches and resolutions, of any honest recognition of the true state of affairs. On the contrary, they join in a single hymn of self-congratulation. If conferences were really able to achieve results, what a renaissance of culture we Jews in America would be enjoying!

We are confronted here with nothing more—or less—than the presence of vested interests, a phenomenon significantly characteristic of American Jewish life in general. Therefore why not on the musical scene too—among the organizers of festivals, the conveners of conferences, the "musical businessmen"? Is it not asking too much to expect self-analysis and self-criticism from such people? They have every right to refuse to testify, on the ground that to do so would be self-incriminating.

Dr. List paid me the compliment of devoting a part of his report to my concert work with the Vinaver Chorus and to my views on synagogue music. I feel it incumbent upon myself, while acknowledging his praise, to deal with the criticism he addresses to me. This will serve as an additional basis for discussion and clarification.

The burden of Dr. List's criticism is that the concert programs of the Vinaver Chorus do not present enough contemporary Jewish music—works by such men as Schoenberg, Paul Dessau, Erich Itor Kahn, and Herbert Fromm. I am quite familiar with the works of these composers, and I am an admirer of some of them, notably Schoenberg.

But as regards *synagogue music,* I must confess to being a conservative. Notwithstanding the current outcry against traditional music—which is expressed in such empty clichés as "God understands every musical language, not merely the 'lowly' *nusach* jargon"—I remain convinced that our liturgical music must be based, for the time being at least, on traditional sources such as the tropes and modes of the synagogue. The composer may create whatever his free imagination dictates, provided he is qualified to do so, but he must draw, consciously or unconsciously, from tradition. As long as the "sources" are not within him he will have to go to them.

To pose the question "traditionalism versus modernism" is premature. The time may come for both. But as things stand at present, "traditionalism" will have to be reinstated—even in our synagogues. For the music heard in most of our synagogues is not traditional synagogue music at all, but a spurious species. It will take time until these salamander-like "compositions" and "arrangements" are ejected and the old prayer modes again granted their rightful place. But only then will we be able to undertake the kind of experimentation based on tradition that I myself advocate. Meanwhile the truly talented Jewish composer can find enough material in our "sources" for a lifetime's creativity.

Yet this does not resolve the question of experimentation with contemporary music in concert programs. There the problem is essentially different and has to be explained in terms of the entire cultural situation. The point is, simply, that a serious Jewish artist in this country does not enjoy absolute freedom in choosing his programs. He is forced by the current situation to exercise caution in programming experimental, contemporary, or unfamiliar music.

One reason for these restrictions should be fairly obvious. After decades of abuse the taste of Jewish music audiences has sunk to a low, maudlin level, and they are, by and large, utterly unprepared for modern music in sizable doses. They would reject it uncomprehendingly were it thrust upon them suddenly. First they must be educated *away* from Second Avenue.

Dr. Gradenwitz saw this as soon as he arrived in the United States. The "musical businessmen," as he calls them, are strongly entrenched. They form part of the vested communal interests that have a stake in the *status quo*. High standards in Jewish music, whether it is Israeli or American, are simply not good business. The seductive dollars beckon, the call of prestige is sounded, and the majority of musicians find it too difficult to repress the "evil impulse."

But the artist is deprived of freedom not only by a public taste that has been corrupted by the *Kitsch* foisted upon it by business-musicians. What encouragement does he get from those in positions of influence and leadership? To what extent do they facilitate his efforts to establish what has been acclaimed in America as the highest type of Jewish music? One wonders what Dr. Gradenwitz thinks of the following artistic credo that was issued by a certain "headquarters for Jewish music": ". . . if the latest 'hit parade' tune is an indication of American mass musical taste, perhaps strictures against taste in Jewish music need not be so harsh. . . . If Jewish masses prefer certain songs of a rather low musical caliber . . . it is because the songs are familiar and warm and elicit an immediate emotional response. . . ." This statement was issued by an influential organization one of whose stated objectives is "to help elevate the standards of Jewish music in content and performance." Dr. List was undoubtedly shocked when he read the statement, as I hope was Dr. Gradenwitz too, especially since his name is listed as a contributing editor to the publication from which it is quoted.

Dr. List writes elsewhere in his article that "Jewish music is an ideal and a cause on which many patrons are willing to spend a great deal of money, and make real sacrifices regardless of the eventual results." This is probably so, but let us be realistic. These "patrons" take their cue from the self-proclaimed experts and leaders of whose views the above quotation is a typical expression.

We are presented with a vicious circle from which the artist can escape only with the greatest of difficulty. Why, when it comes down to it, should we blame the Jewish "masses" for creating the circle? Indeed they are the least culpable ones, for experience has shown that they do respond to good music whenever it is presented to them. The public can be taught to appreciate and prefer solid works and, ultimately, even experimental music. The public may have pre-conceived notions, but at least it has no vested interests, power, or prestige to defend. Communal leadership has hitherto determined standards on the basis, substantially, of ignorance, indifference, or sheer expediency. It is clear that what is called for urgently is a revolution in the practice of this leadership.

But even if we are committed seriously to higher standards, we must be careful to avoid arbitrary judgments and mistakes of understanding in our approach to modern as well as traditional Jewish music. For example: Dr. Gradenwitz resents the criticism voiced by a prominent New York writer and composer, to the effect that Palestinian composers are following German-radicalist tendencies. I quite agree that this is a hasty and perhaps mistaken judgment of the efforts being made by Israeli composers to create something new; it is clear that some serious attempts have been made, and there is ground for optimism regarding the future. Nevertheless, the criticism should not be dismissed too lightly. It is much too easy these days to fall into an opposite fallacy—that of worshiping modern music uncritically. Obviously, we cannot work with the assumption that music is good simply because it is modern. And the New York critic was correct insofar as he perceived that there are some Israeli composers who are unable to lift themselves out of the school in which they were trained.

Dr. Gradenwitz's attitude to Hasidic music did not shock me, I must confess. It is true that a certain sector of German Jewry has always scorned Hasidic and other East European Jewish music, just as it derided the Hasidic tales—that is, before Martin Buber made them fashionable. This kind of Jew, even in Israel, is still ashamed of the East European cultural heritage, accepting preferably only that part of the Jewish tradition which stems from the Biblical epoch, at the very latest, and refusing to identify himself with the "ghetto mentality." Such a Jew is eager to show that the Hasidic *nigun* has been influenced by Slavic melodies, after which he will be able to dispose of it quickly as "ghetto music." But these arguments are essentially irrelevant. No one will deny Slavic influences on Hasidic song, or that poor Hasidic music exists. But there is still a veritable treasure to be found in the authentic melodies of the Jewish mystics, particularly in the early and fervently religious *nigunim,* and in those of the Habad branch of Hasidism. One can only wish that more young Israeli composers were deeply rooted in these traditional sources.

If Dr. Gradenwitz believes that Israeli composers can create worthwhile music only by "disregarding" their heritage, he is greatly mistaken. I fear, however, that his lack of long familiarity with the subject-matter plays a great role in his attitude. Only unfamiliarity could lead one to such superficial judgments regarding Hasidic music. I admit that it is extremely difficult to *know* Hasidic music unless it has been imbibed from one's earliest years on. Not only Dr. Gradenwitz, but many others, who have persuaded themselves of their knowledge of this music, do not even begin to understand it. The maudlin and falsely sentimental renderings of the Hasidic *nigun* that are most commonly encountered jar me as much as they do Dr. Gradenwitz. It is far from easy to notate Hasidic *nigunim* correctly, and even less easy to interpret them authoritatively. Yet Dr. Gradenwitz's lack of knowledge in these matters is excusable because, even today, most Hasidic music available in published scores or recordings is corrupted, and most of what is authentic has not yet been made accessible.

JEWISH culture of the Diaspora period is an integral and organic part of the Jewish people and its entire cultural expression. It cannot be amputated from the life and consciousness of the people without inflicting a serious cultural loss. Instead of encouraging our young composers to "disregard" their heritage, one would do better to heed the advice of Goethe: *"Was du ererbt von deinen Vaetern hast, erwirb es, um es zu besitzen* (What you have inherited from your ancestors, earn—so that you may possess it)." If our "liberated" young composers are seeking "ancient Hebraic" music, they will find elements of Biblical cantillation—the oldest remnant of our musical heritage—still preserved in our liturgical music. Knowledge of this music, as well as of the Yiddish folksong and the Hasidic melody, will not deter the Israeli genius from "tilling a soil completely his own," as Dr. Gradenwitz urges. To absorb a cultural tradition by no means requires slavish adherence to it, nor does it necessarily imply limitation. *Selection* is the word—not rejection.

THE STUDY OF MAN

THE PROPHETS OF THE NEW CONSERVATISM

What Curbs for Presumptuous Democratic Man?

GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB

AT THE close of 1820, a year of rebellion in Spain, Portugal, and Naples, of political assassination in France and conspiratorial activity in England, Prince Metternich composed a "Confession of Faith" to be forwarded as a secret memorandum to Czar Alexander I. The lawlessness of the times, Metternich told the Czar, was the fault of that modern phenomenon, "the presumptuous man," the man who professed to be "the sole judge of his own actions."

Since 1820, the history of the world has been the history of presumption. Every country has experienced a social or political revolution, or even several revolutions, led by men who refused to accept the judgment of established authority. And each revolution has been preceded by a train of harbingers prophesying disaster, and followed by a train of mourners lamenting over the event. As a result, almost every generation since the fall of Metternich and the death of Alexander has been exposed to what the historian is pleased to call a "conservative reaction." The conservative prefers to think of himself as a saving remnant come to rescue the world from the democratic hordes that are the modern equivalent of the barbarian invaders, from the presumptuous men who will not stay down. At his every appearance in history, the conservative discerns the unique, unprecedented symptoms of a civilization torn by anarchy, liable to momentary disintegration, a peril to the individual soul and the national spirit. In every age there is anxious talk of the "crisis of our time."

The crisis of one time generally proves to be the crisis of all time, and the murmurings of conservatives merge in a soothing hum of lamentations and exhortations in which the words tradition, law and order, aristocracy, and hierarchy can occasionally be distinguished. Some few voices are striking enough to command attention; such are the voices of Tocqueville, Burckhardt, and Henry Adams. Their sermons are unique not because of the special cogency of their arguments or the infallibility of their knowledge, but because of the fineness of their perceptions, the precision of their analysis, the pathos of genuine involvement.

To conservative voices such as these, even the presumptuous reader can respond warmly and wholly. The conviction of truth is given immediately; it need not be teased out of them, worried over. It is only when the reader approaches thinkers of a lesser order, the minor prophets of conservatism, that he starts to carp, examines the logic of their arguments, exposes their assumptions, quarrels with their metaphors, questions their consistency. He leaves behind reflective appreciation to engage in political debate.

CONSERVATISM REVISITED, by the Pulitzer-prize poet Peter Viereck, is only one of a small tide of recent books in the same vein. Someone has recently remarked that there are probably more Americans writing books in defense of conservatism, than there are conservatives showing up at the polls; this is probably an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that conservative political thinking—if not conservative politics—has survived its seven lean years and is now waxing vigorous. Here, GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB subjects some of the representative books of the conservative revival to a critical appraisal. Miss Himmelfarb edited Lord Acton's *Essays on Freedom and Power* published last year. She has studied at Brooklyn College, the University of Chicago, and Cambridge University.

At first glance, Peter Viereck's recently published *Conservatism Revisited* (Scribner's, 187 pp. $2.50) gives promise of belonging to one of the more rigorous varieties of conservative thinking. To go to Metternich for a lesson in conservatism is a bold stroke. To a certain extent the way had been prepared by the provocative work of Guglielmo Ferrero, but it remained for Viereck to rediscover Metternich as a political mentor and philosopher for contemporary America. That his is an unpopular position, Viereck has no doubt. And he pronounces himself reconciled to the scorn of popular opinion. It comes as a surprise, therefore, to discover how little he earns it.

The liberal whom Viereck undertakes to engage in combat is possessed of an optimistic and secular, often hedonistic, religion of progress; a faith in the masses, in the natural goodness of man, and in modern technics; a taste for equality rather than freedom, change rather than tradition, and relative rather than absolute standards. The conservative presumably represents the contradictory of these propositions, although Viereck does not catalogue them in such bald form. But Viereck is no hotheaded agitator of conservatism. In a period of Communist totalitarian expansion, he looks upon liberalism as distinctly a lesser evil and a potential ally. By "mediation, reconciliation, and tolerant compromise," he hopes that liberal conservatism and conservative liberalism, coming from opposite directions, can be brought together at the point which Goethe once designated as genuine liberalism: a reliance upon gradual reform and a patient toleration of "inevitable wrongs."

From this definition of a liberalism that is also conservative to Metternich's species of conservatism would seem a long way, if Viereck did not take a short-cut. Metternich ceases to be the politician who sought to impose by force the institutions of a legitimacy that had collapsed when confronted with the French Revolution and had been incapable of offering either moral or physical resistance to Napoleon. Instead he becomes the champion of law against force. The motto on his coat of arms, *"Kraft im Recht,"* Viereck takes to mean "Strength in Law," or, at worst, "Force within Law"; in either case he sees it as a significant antithesis to Bismarck's "Blood and Iron." Perhaps unwittingly, Viereck makes of Metternich a curiously pathetic figure. Tied to the conference table at a time when his opponents were marching to the battlefield, shackled by ethical scruples while others basely exploited the possibilities of *Realpolitik,* Metternich becomes a kindly, imposed-upon underdog. It seems almost uncharitable for the critic to observe that Metternich's famous conferences were intended only as the prelude to bigger and better battles (as Naples, Piedmont, and Spain had the misfortune of discovering). And it hardly seems necessary to point out that Metternich, the master diplomat, would no more have inscribed the actual principles of a repressive authoritarianism on his coat of arms than Bismarck would have inscribed "Blood and Iron" on his.

In wanting to give Metternich credit for too much, Viereck succeeds only in detracting from the credit genuinely due him as an inspired diplomat, a ruthless politician, and a thinker rarely confused by the stratagems of his own diplomacy and politics. Nor does Viereck do justice to Metternich's opponents when he implies that the alternative to Metternich's leadership was that of the nationalist, racist, proto-Nazi Friedrich Jahn, or that the alternative to Metternich's policy of legitimacy was a system of "mass politics." Jahn was an aberration of the times, and mass politics was rarely an ideal, let alone a genuine political possibility. Metternich's real opponents were liberals, even conservative liberals, who could not tolerate a system that put a premium on corrupt, tyrannical, and at bottom anarchic government. It was against these liberals that Metternich methodically and self-consciously proceeded. And it is here that Viereck loses heart. He does no more to rehabilitate conservatism as Metternich understood it than to rehabilitate Metternich as he must have understood himself.

If there is any one point, any single empirical test, by which conservatism can be distinguished from liberalism, it is a respect for aristocracy and aristocratic institutions. Every tenet of liberalism repudiates the idea of a fixed aristocratic class; every tenet of conservatism affirms it. It is decreed by tradition, implied in the concept of a social hierarchy, required by the principles of "law and order." If conservatives deride democracy as a system of mass politics, it is because they have a vision of another political system, that of 18th or early 19th century England perhaps, when there was a genuine governing aristocracy. Unfortunately the England of that robust time is a fading memory to all but the most tenacious conservatives. Viereck, not among the most tenacious, frankly withdraws the concept of aristocracy as a class, but then hastens to introduce the idea of an aristocratic "spirit." The class may have become "anachronistic and functionless," but the spirit is vital. And the aristocratic spirit—"dutiful public service, insistence on quality and standards, the decorum and ethical inner check of *noblesse oblige*"—is, conveniently enough, "open to all, regardless of class." The nobleman need no longer acquire political office by hereditary right; appointments can be made democratically from all classes. Indeed, "in an effective democracy, this spirit permeates the whole community."

As with aristocracy, so with most of the other major categories of political thought. Conservatism's strongest talking point in the past few decades has been the growth of the absolute state, a development to which liberals have inadvertently contributed in their zeal for democratic equality and economic security. Viereck does, to be sure, pay the customary respects to the "leveling equality" and "majority despotism" of modern democracy, to the "century of the common man" that can produce only the "commonest man." But he will not be churlish, like some of his more quarrelsome conservative colleagues. Democracy, too, has its good points. In fact, it was the conservative Disraeli, Viereck reminds us, who was responsible for the extension of the franchise to the English working class, and it is this broad-mindedness of Disraeli that Viereck recommends to modern conservatives. A democracy, in fact, can be the "best government on earth," if only it will try to elevate all of its citizens into aristocrats instead of degrading them into an indistinguishable mass.

Nor need conservatives, Viereck assures us, shy from the ideal of economic security. Security, he grants, does tend to put material needs over spiritual ones, to regiment the individual, and to endanger liberty. But conservatives cannot deny the legitimate demands of security and social justice. Social reform, welfare legislation, is the ethical duty of every government, and conservatives should be quick to commend it. They need only keep in mind that while welfare laws are good, the "welfare superstate" is not. There is a fine, imaginary line beyond which the desire for security entails a loss of liberty. Upon that line Viereck beseeches us to fix our attention.

Our attention, unfortunately, is apt to wander. We had supposed that it is the liberal who fancies that self-imposed, imaginary boundaries can confine men; the function of the stronger-minded conservative, traditionally, has been to explode this optimistic illusion. But Viereck is not the traditional conservative. Everything, it seems, is reconcilable with everything else in his benevolent universe, until his conservatism becomes a grab-bag of all good intentions, all worthy ideals, all honorific labels. Where the older, more rigorous conservatives emphasized the recalcitrance of ideas and institutions, the fixed limits of political action, and the antinomy of principles, Viereck thinks of ideas as eternally pliable, of action as open to infinite possibilities, and of principles as all ultimately congenial.

One stamp of the conservative, however, is ineradicable—the distrust of the completely free person, the man beholden to no one but himself, Metternich's presumptuous man. Against this danger the conservative has at his disposal a battery of powerful weapons in the form of social authorities, institutions, laws, and conventions. There cannot be too many of these deterrents. They may be physical or moral, real or fancied; the conservative does not care so long as they have the desired effect. Thus Viereck invokes religion to stabilize society and prevent an amoral statism. But religion must not be carried away by its own enthusiasm, he cautions. Its dogmas had best not be taken literally, for obscurantism can be as dangerous and fanatical as free-thinking. What is required is a humanist respect for all religious sentiments, regardless of denomination. "When the historian concludes that religion, with its brotherhood and its ethical sanctions, best sustains a free society, he is supporting religion as a humanist in the Erasmus tradition, not as a theologian." Utility, rather than any sectarian idea of the truth, becomes his ultimate religious principle. In each religion Viereck discovers the virtue that society can capitalize on: "the stern moral commandments and social justice of Judaism; the love for beauty and for untrammeled intellectual speculation of the free Hellenic mind; the Roman Empire's universalism and its exaltation of law; and the Aristotelianism, Thomism, and anti-nominalism included in the Middle Ages." There is no God and the humanist is his prophet.

Against the vulgar materialist preaching the doctrine of the full stomach, Viereck comes to propound a conservatism based upon the non-material "moral absolutes of the spirit." It is the paradox of life, he says, that these moral absolutes, which are "non-existent," should be the foundation of existence. A more striking paradox, the reader may find, is the fact that these non-existent moral absolutes are identified in Viereck's mind with the undeniably existent and neither moral nor absolute precepts of positive law—with "established traditional legality" rather than an abstract moral law. If Viereck can be said to take a stand anywhere, it is here, with established law and tradition. He admits that law and tradition, the haphazard accumulation of centuries, combine good and evil in inextricable confusion. Yet he holds it to be the duty of the conservative to sanction the presence of evil rather than endanger the structure of society. "You weaken the aura of all good laws every time you break a bad one," he warns. With the greatest of ease Viereck makes the descent from the exalted heights of moral and spiritual absolutes to the lowlands of Poor Richard's wisdom.

After Viereck, it is comforting to turn to an author who promises to pursue a single line of thought. Where Viereck's book is a "timely" excursion, Bertrand de Jouvenel's work, *On Power* (Viking, 421 pp. $5.00), gives the appearance of being a scholarly tome laboriously worrying history for a systematic exposition of the nature of social and political power. The exposition is not as systematic as the chapter titles suggest, and the historical and anthropological evidence is both more conventional and more questionable than the professional scholar would like, but there is a consistency of tone and a logical ordering of ideas for which the reader may be grateful.

For Jouvenel the idea of power is the one constant in political society. Power is authority—not an impersonal, anonymous authority emanating from a nation, not an "it" operating without intention or passion, but a "they," a body of men governing other men and themselves governed by their passions, the greatest passion being the will to power. Power, in capital letters, is an abstraction representing the governmental authority in the state. As the fact of power may be predicated of every society, so the tendency to expansion may be predicated of every power. Power may be monarchical or democratic, egoistical or altruistic, but whatever its shape it will seek to usurp a greater and greater place in society. Jouvenel makes no bones about it; power is a necessary feature of society, a necessary evil, and the more it is permitted to expand, the more evil it is.

Viereck may be more ready to label himself as a conservative, but Jouvenel is the more authentic specimen. The connection between Jouvenel's analysis of power and his predilection for conservatism is plain. Power (the state) expands at the expense of the rest of society; it is engaged in a constant tug of war with the social forces that are relatively autonomous. In a monarchical or aristocratic state, power is confined to a small group. A democracy, by making the mass of people participants in power, makes power almost synonymous with society. The people's desire to limit power is replaced by the desire to share in it, and, having shared in it, to increase it. There is no tyranny like the tyranny of the masses, for from the masses there is no refuge, no escape.

The idea of an aristocracy holds no fear and no embarrassment for Jouvenel. With the aplomb of the natural aristocrat, he finds in the class society of antiquity the true condition of liberty. The "freeman" of antiquity was not, as we are inclined to assume today, everyman. He was a man of a certain class who was habituated to act in a certain way and could be counted on to act in that way. Liberty was a privilege a man merited and enjoyed, not a right which anyone might claim. Jouvenel does not shy from the disagreeable conclusion that for some men to be free, others had to be slaves, that the role of citizen and gentleman required the leisure made possible only by a slave society. That there is no aristocracy today is equally the fault of the patrician and the plebeian, he admits. But he is not deluded by the vision of an "aristocratic spirit" descending upon the masses. With the passing of the aristocracy, the aristocratic spirit, which is nothing less than the spirit of liberty, has become more and more difficult to evoke.

In good conservative fashion, Jouvenel is an unregenerate pessimist. Power expands, crushing liberty and individuality beneath it. Every revolution ostensibly fought for liberty inaugurates a regime more absolutist than its predecessor, for it takes over the old instruments of power and creates new ones. The world becomes more and more democratic, and democracy becomes more and more oppressive. Disraeli—despite Viereck—was playing the game of Caesarism when he extended the franchise to masses of men who had a stake not in liberty but only in power. And Caesarism became more irresistible as it was discovered that security is a more primary need than liberty and that between security and liberty there is no mediation. Where Viereck's mind roams freely, fashioning the world to its fancy, Jouvenel's is confined within the boundaries of a depressingly deterministic universe.

This universe, however, is not entirely without possibilities of reform. Power, Jouvenel holds, can either be checked by the conflict of opposing social forces, or limited by the operation of law. In a democracy the first is illusory because no minority can withstand a majority on any issue the majority considers to be crucial. We are left, then, with law. But not any kind of law can save a society as far gone as ours on the road to absolutism. Men today do not pretend to respect a law that is law only by virtue of ancestral sanctions and taboos. Moreover this law has been so long at the mercy of interests, opinions, and passions that it has itself become the instrument of power. What is required is a measure outside of man, an objective standard by which man and man-made law can be judged. Even constitutional law and judicial review only serve to approximate that measure and may, in fact, fall far short of it, for the constitution itself is tainted by political opportunism. The ultimate, immutable measure—the "eternal verities"—is to be found only in natural law as expounded, for example, by Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Here power can discover its proper function and its true limits—its duty to enforce respect for the true law and in turn to be bound by it.

IN DIGNITY of conception and soundness of logic, Jouvenel is unimpeachable, so that one feels almost obliged to apologize for caviling about truth and relevancy. His gloomy prognostication of the fate of society and his desperate proposals for remedy—for natural law is, to the modern sceptic, a desperate proposal—hinge upon his conception of power as an ever-expanding force intent upon destroying or revolutionizing society. But the fact is that power is as often conservative as it is revolutionary. If it is false to suppose, with the Marxist, that the state is the docile instrument of the ruling class in society—that the contemporary state, for example, is merely the tool of capitalism—it is equally extravagant to suppose, with Jouvenel, that the state is always bent upon undermining the dominant social class—that "whether it is socialist or whether it is not, Power [the state] must always be at war with the capitalist authorities and despoil the capitalists of their accumulated wealth." This is standing the Marxist theory on its head with a vengeance. Even before Marx himself had composed his most important work, Tocqueville set the style for Jouvenel's acrobatics when he described, in a brilliant feat of historical imagination and insight, the alliance of the pre-revolutionary French monarchy and the middle class against the socially dominant aristocracy. With the image of France and the teaching of Tocqueville before him, Jouvenel sees all of history as a war of the state against the ruling class. An English historian, on the other hand, remembering his own 18th century, when the aristocracy was both the ruling power in the state and the dominant social class, would be inclined to think of power as the agent of society rather than as its enemy.

Contemporary history doles out its evidence impartially to support either Tocqueville or Marx. In the Nazi state, power was aggressive, building up its own authority at the expense of social authorities, pursuing its own ends in defiance of society's. In England it has been conservative: that the Conservative party should be solicitous of established interests is taken for granted, but even the socialists have been reluctant to claim the full measure of control that they might.

Power itself, it appears, can be modest. The institutions through which it rules exert a restraining influence upon it. If the passions of men have been known to alter institutions, the disposition of institutions as often as not succeeds in altering men. The implications of this reading of history are obvious. If power is not necessarily the ruthless vampire Jouvenel believes it to be, democracy may not be as fearsome as he supposes. The will of the majority, to assume for the moment that power can reside in a majority, is less than omnipotent. History, conventions, institutions, exert a backward drag upon it. The conservative, playing his hand shrewdly, can even count on finding an ally in the bureaucracy of the democratic state.

Jouvenel has none of Viereck's equivocations as to the ultimate measure of men's actions. His equivocations appear in lesser, temporal matters, so that he can write of the "Stuart or Bourbon or Romanov 'tyranny'" as if these were not truly tyrannies, and can discuss tolerantly "the good-natured Louis XVI," "the weakling Nicholas II," and the unambitious Charles I, who "was no danger to anyone." If natural law has any concrete meaning, if it pretends to a concern about the sacredness of the individual personality, then these tyrannies were as odious as any in history. Jouvenel would reply that the revolutions which overthrew these tyrannies produced regimes which were even more oppressive. But if it is the duty of the historian to caution us against the hazard —or fatality, as Jouvenel seems to believe—of the degeneration of revolutions, it remains the duty of the moralist to encourage, not stifle, the impulse to justice.

This is both the merit and the failing of a conservatism like Jouvenel's. Nothing short of an absolute moral code can expose the presumptuousness of man. But nothing is more certain to fortify a man in his presumptions than an absolute moral code. Like power, morality is both conservative and revolutionary. It teaches men to distinguish between heaven and earth, and it inspires them to create a heaven on earth. It makes them impatient with a power that is evil, but because they are only human they must oppose power with power, evil with incipient evil. Conservatism can be legitimized only by appealing to an absolute morality. But its practical effectiveness, unfortunately, depends upon an attachment to a particular code of positive law. Viereck was right, after all, when he pointed out that "you weaken the aura of all good laws every time you break a bad one." It is also true that you weaken the aura of all laws, good or bad, merely by subjecting them to comparison with an eternal, natural law.

The only kind of conservatism that is safe from revolution—safe, at least, in theory—is one which frankly rests its case on an actual historical situation which it judges to be good. It must seek to maintain or restore that situation in its entirety, abandon all pretence of choosing between good and bad, and look for no higher justification than that what is, or was, is right—or if justification is necessary, be content with the modest assertion that what will be will be worse. In view of the fact, however, that this is likely to be unsatisfactory to all but the already confirmed conservative and that as a missionary gospel it is almost certain to fail, Jouvenel may be wise in holding out for dignity and sublimity even at the expense of practicality.

THE most disagreeable critic could not accuse American conservatism, at least in its most popular form, of want of practicality. Natural law, even tradition, are beyond its ken. With the decline of the Southern and New England "aristocracies," conservatism had transferred its loyalties to the less elegant, more substantial class of citizens for whom the practical principles of laissez-faire constitute the eternal truth of economics and a sufficient philosophy of life. For a more thoughtful, sophisticated conservatism, one must go to James Burnham, who can draw upon a European tradition, although a European tradition very different from that of either Jouvenel or Viereck. Yet even Burnham never permits himself to forget that the first injunction is practicality. In David Spitz's recent *Patterns of Anti-Democratic Thought* (Macmillan, 304 pp. $4.50), the work of Burnham is the first and by far the most important subject treated. And Burnham will take no nonsense from the impractical theoreticians of ethics, religion, or metaphysics. Only facts, he holds, scientific, demonstrable, practical facts, are worthy of the serious political thinker.

The principal fact to emerge from Burnham's two volumes, *The Managerial Revolution* (1941) and *The Machiavellians* (1943), is the one which had so impressed Jouvenel—the fact of power. Politics is a struggle for power, in which power is a means to other ends but also, and more importantly, an end in itself. Where Jouvenel is a frankly hostile judge, Burnham claims to be a neutral observer and a scientific analyst. To Burnham it is as futile to think of deploring or condemning power as to deplore or condemn the movement of the tides. Power is a fact of political life, and before facts the scientist must be submissive.

Jouvenel, hating power, watched it become more powerful as it became more democratic; his treatise on power, therefore, is an attack upon democracy. Burnham, dispassionately observing power, noticed that it remained in the hands of a minority in spite of public professions of democracy; his treatise on power, therefore, is a denial of democracy. In a synthesis of the work of Robert Michels (*Political Parties,* 416 pp. $4.50, reprinted this year by the Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois), Gaetano

Mosca (*The Ruling Class*), and Vilfredo Pareto (*Mind and Society*), and of his own analysis of contemporary America, Burnham presents a theory of society which is intended to embrace all political systems. Whatever the superficial form of government, the reality is the concentration of power in the hands of a small ruling class. Since the ruling class today is not the mass of enfranchised citizens but the relatively few men who rule in its name, democratic despotism in its literal sense, a tyranny of the masses, is as fanciful as democratic rule. Under the guise of democracy, however—and here Burnham temporarily makes common cause with Jouvenel—totalitarianism may flourish. This happens when the state, ostensibly representing the people, is permitted to arrogate to itself one social function after another, thus making obsolete all the autonomous forces in society. The idea of democracy is an illusion, but the illusion is dangerous, more dangerous, indeed, than the fact could be. The tyranny of the majority would be bad enough, the implication is, but a tyranny exercised by a minority in the name of the majority and with the passive consent of the majority is even worse.

Jouvenel refuses to compromise with the egoistic instincts that go into the drive for power; against power he can only invoke the spiritual force of natural law. Burnham, himself a Machiavellian in the tradition of all good politicians, insists that power must check power, materialism must counter materialism, and egoism must vie with egoism. Everything else he consigns to the trash-heap of ideology as the verbal trappings designed to conceal the true ends of power. If selfish interests want to concentrate power in their own hands, other selfish interests, by putting in their own selfish bids for power, help keep liberty alive. Liberty depends upon the virility of the autonomous, traditional forces in society—religious, economic, political, military. What democracy looks down upon as "pressure groups," liberty looks up to for its security. "Juridical defense"—the formal structure of laws and constitutions—is effective in checking power only when behind it is an array of forces contending for power.

JOUVENEL's law is a moral one, a prescription of the way men should act; Burnham claims that his is a scientific one, a description of the way men do act. It is proper, then, that the "iron law of oligarchy"—the term is Michels'—by which democracy is converted into oligarchy, should give rise not to a morally superior class, such as Jouvenel's aristocracy, but to a class superior only in having the good fortune to occupy a particularly strategic position in society. The ruling class, according to the Machiavellians, rules for no more exalted reason than that it happens to fulfill the "organizational imperatives" of society. The difference between the political characters of Jouvenel and of Burnham may be measured by the difference between Burnham's "managerial" class and Jouvenel's aristocracy of cultured gentlemen.

Burnham restored to conservatism some of the hard-headedness it had lost in an effete age of liberal democracy. But his hard-headedness itself nurtures illusion. By eliminating from the universe of political reality anything that smacks of morals, of non-material and non-individual interests, he has depleted reality of much that gives it texture and depth. When he reduces Dante's *De Monarchia,* for example, to a party tract of the Ghibellines—the opponents of the papacy—by ruthlessly cutting down "the myths, the ghosts, the idealistic abstractions" of God, eternal salvation, universal empire, and universal peace, he exposes many interesting and inglorious details of the political struggles of the time, but he sacrifices other details that are of more than antiquarian or poetic interest. Sociologists will be quick to point out that even myths and ghosts can function in politics on their own terms, influencing the actions of leaders as well as of the more gullible masses.

It is a more serious objection, however—and here most sociologists beat a quick retreat—that the ideology may not be a myth or ghost at all, that it may, on rare occasions, enter politics not only as a psychological fact but as an objective truth about social reality. Almost no one today ventures to suggest that the democratic "ideology" of the general will and the general welfare is such a truth, that mankind is united by an authentic, common interest as well as divided by private interests.

Yet this is the crucial question separating liberal democracy and conservatism. Political philosophy, Burnham to the contrary notwithstanding, is an exercise in the legitimization of political institutions, laws, and traditions. The only means of legitimization available to the democrat—although he has recourse to it reluctantly, abashed by accusations of naivety on the one hand and demagogy on the other—is to assert the validity of the principles of general will and general welfare. Conservatives, however they may quarrel among themselves, are agreed in denying the existence of this general will. Viereck may be only a half-hearted champion of Metternich's theory that institutions, laws, and traditions are legitimized by history, but he is an enthusiastic opponent of the democratic theory of the general will. The only form of legitimacy recognized by Jouvenel is natural law, while Burnham finds legitimacy—although he prefers a more neutral word—in the conflict of interests and powers. For all of them the general will is a myth devised by ingenious politicians to perpetuate their own power or by an intolerant majority to suppress inconvenient minorities.

Burnham has been most successful in bringing into disrepute the idea of the general will. It is typical of the lack of conviction or imagination among most democratic apologists that David Spitz, in his confutation of Burnham, should fail to emphasize this problem, choosing, instead, to elaborate upon a host of formal, logical, and methodological objections. Instead of pressing Burnham for a more rigorous definition of the ruling class or of the relation between politics and economics, he might, with greater profit, have taken the initiative by boldly affirming the meaningfulness of the general will. Just as surely as men are motivated by personal and class interests, so they are inspired by social interests, by some notion of a general interest which is not merely the sum of all private interests but which transcends all private interests. It takes a particularly strong-minded naturalist and empiricist to ignore the most palpable and natural social fact, the fact that society, like the individual, has a real spiritual and psychological existence with its own needs and problems. Spitz need not have been offended by Burnham's assumption that economic and class interests play such a large part in politics. There is nothing remarkable about this, nothing remarkable about the corruption of men or ideals. What is remarkable is that economic interests can never manage to subvert ideals completely, that a genuine conception of the general welfare should persist in the face of such great odds.

There is a famous quip that there is more in common between two deputies one of whom is a revolutionary, than between two revolutionaries one of whom is a deputy. Why this should be triumphantly cited by conservatives as a criticism of democracy is difficult to see, for it is just this commonplace of political experience that is encouraging to liberal democracy. Deputies are much of a kind, not only in sharing a common predilection for graft, but in sharing a common fund of ideals and attitudes before which their class commitments have to give way. If there is matter here for despair, there is also matter for hope.

That there is a truth beyond ideologies and even a truth beyond power, interests, and passions has been one of the most interesting motifs in the work of Leo Strauss. His most recent book, *On Tyranny* (Political Science Classics, 121 pp. $2.25), a brilliant exposition of Xenophon's "Hiero," gives the theme an intriguing twist by introducing the concept of "misology." In its dictionary definition, misology is a hatred of reason and reasoning. As a political conception it implies a distrust of free, democratic inquiry; by extension it implies the existence of an esoteric truth which it would be dangerous or unwise to circulate in society. A truth, an objective truth about the nature of social reality, may become, when it escapes from the sanctum of philosophy, a political "falsehood." The philosopher might know it to be the truth, for example, that social institutions have their origin in a struggle for power, in force rather than justice, but he is morally and politically obliged to act as if they had their origin in justice rather than force. The truths of philosophy, the misologist would say, are not necessarily the truths of politics and morality.

It would be too lengthy a digression to describe the subtle maneuvers by which Strauss succeeds in making Xenophon mean exactly the opposite of what he said, and so clears him of the suspicion of misology. The simple idea of misology, however, divorced from its context in the "Hiero," can help clarify the character of conservative thought. What is the idea of the presumptuous man that so exercises conservatives but the fear that the free use of man's reason, his intelligence, will undermine society?

Not all conservatives, to be sure, are conscious of the fear in the same way. Edmund Burke was one of the few to see it clearly and admit it frankly. Prejudices were far better than reason, he argued, as he inveighed against the men of the Enlightenment who imagined that they could spin a new world out of the matter of their minds. Contemporary conservatives have not Burke's boldness or candidness, but in one way or another they attest to conservatism's distrust of intelligence and free inquiry. Viereck, paying lip service to the humanist reverence for reason, casts about for ways to confine reason, and he comes up with a religion that is not for religion's sake but for society's, and a law that is society's and no other's. Jouvenel more astutely tries to limit man's reason by establishing the superiority of a divine law. Burnham takes the desire for the deed: the masses cannot act rationally in politics; it is the privilege of the elite to do so, and it is the elite which contrives the myths that hold the masses in bondage and society in order.

The conservative suspects that the truth, which gives life and dignity—and power—to an aristocracy or elite, might bring catastrophe if allowed to permeate the lower layers of society. Only the presumptuous man, the democrat, would dare to bring the truth into the market place—a "Phantastick Vision," as Diogenes is made to say in a dialogue conceived by Lytton Strachey:

"Locke: If men were told the Truth, might they not believe it? Let Rulers be bold and honest and it is possible that the folly of their Peoples will disappear.

"Diogenes: A pretty, Phantastick Vision. But History is against you.

"Moses: And Prophecy.

"Diogenes: And Common Observation. Look at the world at this moment and what do we see? So long as it endures the world will continue to be ruled by cajolery, by injustice, and by imposture.

"Locke: If that be so, I must take leave to lament the Destiny of the Human Race."

LETTERS FROM READERS

"God and the Psychoanalysts"

To the Editor of Commentary:

The article "God and the Psychoanalysts," which appeared in the November issue, illustrates a widespread misconception, namely, that of identifying religion with theology. We overlook that the word "religion" means not one thing but many things, and that while religion in its varied senses is espoused by vast numbers of people, only a few are theologians or are at all concerned about theological quandaries.

Large areas of those interests which have acquired the name "religion" lie in the domain of music, painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, and dramatics, especially that province of dramatics known as ritual. Sometimes religion consists of ecclesiastical or synagogal organization. Again, religion can be identified with affectionate and felicitous human relationships and with social idealism. In these several religious interests, how scant is the role of theologizing! Of this, the article "God and the Psychoanalysts" seems to be oblivious.

Psychoanalysis is a mode of therapy. It is also a mode of explaining mental processes. Psychoanalysis would, accordingly, challenge a religion identified with a competing mode of therapy or with a rival mode of psychological explanation. Yet the forms of religion are legion which stand entirely uncommitted to any special therapeutic technique or to any special school of psychological interpretation. With those types of religion, how can psychoanalysis collide?

In its diagnostic capacity, psychoanalysis may, correctly or incorrectly, pronounce certain fancies or certain practices unwholesome. Such allegedly unwholesome tendencies crop up everywhere in human life, the domain of religion not excluded. Yet historically religion has been no less often concerned with combating the unwholesome. For correcting the unwholesome, psychoanalysis might find in religion not always an obstacle but sometimes an ally.

Throughout the ages, religion has grown by "religionizing." People tend to bring, within the scope of what they deem sacred, anything that seems fraught with great advantage. Thus did agriculture once become a part of religion: medicine became a part of religion: law, education, and art became parts of religion. Eventually, love and beauty, peace and social endeavor became parts of religion. It would be but a continuation of this process if those who see in psychoanalysis an unprecedented possibility of healing illness or of throwing light upon the inexplicable should "religionize" psychoanalysis. This appears to be what is happening in some quarters. One may contend that psychoanalysis will disappoint those expectations. But, beyond that, what objection is there to raise? . . .

The author of "God and the Psychoanalysts" recommends, as preferable to psychoanalysis, a certain theology. If psychoanalysis be not a form of theology but a form of medication or psychological explanation, there can hardly be any antithesis between the author's theology on the one hand and psychoanalysis on the other. Possibly our author identifies psychoanalysis with Freud's personal crotchets [regarding religion]. In that event, one who sees no need of such identification will likewise see no need of our author's remonstrance.

At bottom, the author seems to find at variance with his theology some of the psychoanalytic surmises about the origin of the idea of God. He identifies religion with some dissenting surmises on that point. But religion can consist in something far other than surmises. Religion can embrace, instead of theories as to origins, experiences as to values. The word "God" need not function amid attempts to explain. It can function amid our responses to that which life brings us of hope, love, courage, and strength. It can, like art, serve not our need for information but our need for inspiration. In his solicitude about truth, valid information is what our author understands by "truth." But information is a means toward an end. The import of "God" can lie, beyond all means, in the larger goals.

Our author's religion, in brief, is but one of many kinds of religion. There are other kinds, and those other kinds may well hold themselves neutral or even friendly toward psychoanalysis.

Abraham J. Cronbach

Hebrew Union College
Cincinnati, Ohio

To the Editor of Commentary:

As one of the "bright young rabbis" mentioned by the still younger and brighter Irving Kristol in his almost frantic insistence on the incompatibility of religion and psychiatry, I presume I may be permitted a few paragraphs of comment. I have no thought of demonstrating whether or not I know as much about Freud as Mr. Kristol does by dealing with the specifics he raises. My quarrel with him is rather one of method. . . .

There can be no question that Mr. Kristol's kind of "religion" is completely incompatible with Mr. Kristol's kind of "psychoanalysis." There is very real room for doubt, however, whether either of his interpretations is accurate, or whether indeed he has bothered to learn much about psychoanalysis since Freud or religion since Moses.

In short: he seems here to insist quite stubbornly on static, unchanging concepts of both religion and psychoanalysis in order to make them appear irreconcilable. What reasonable justification can there be for saying, as he does, that religion lives "under the jurisdiction of the past. . . . God's word, spoken in the remote past and now hardly audible, is ever more true than the persistent chatter of men"? Or that "religion has to deny the thesis of progressive human evolution. . . ."?

To be sure there undoubtedly are certain kinds of "religion" which live completely "under the jurisdiction of the past," just as there are psychiatrists here and there who have made of their interpretation of Freud a closed orthodoxy. But it would be no more accurate to generalize in the one case than in the other. For the modern religionist—be he Christian or Jew—God's word is a progressive, growing, never-ending revelation which is today "hardly audible" only to those who have stuffed their ears with cotton. And conversely, today's psychoanalysts have tempered Freud's strict rejection of religion (much to Mr. Kristol's discomfort, alas) with greater and deeper understanding. (One speculates, incidentally, on how much of Freud's bitterness toward religion was motivated by his own unconscious resentment against being a Jew.)

I have myself enjoyed rather extended conversation with both brothers Menninger and with other psychoanalysts who see not only compatibility, but mutual dependence between an evolving religion and a growing psychiatry. Is their understanding of the science of mental health less perceptive than Mr. Kristol's? Or is it their comprehension of religion that is faulty?

What Mr. Kristol has done here is to set with the specific bait of religion and psychoanalysis the old, old trap which used to tempt the unwary more generally with religion and science. The "logic" goes something like this: (a) The religion of three thousand years ago and the science of today are largely incompatible. (b) If religion refuses to adjust its sights to a world of expanding knowledge, it will no longer be able to claim the minds or hearts of intelligent adults. Therefore it *ought* to grow. (c) If mature religion does continue the process of growth and change, it thereby contaminates itself with the mundane and ceases to be "spiritual." Therefore it *must not* grow. (d) Therefore religion and science are incompatible.

This is precisely what Mr. Kristol has done here in terms of religion and psychoanalysis. . . .

Roland B. Gittelsohn
Central Synagogue of Nassau County
Rockville Center, New York

Mr. Kristol Replies

To the Editor of Commentary:

The distinction that Dr. Cronbach makes between religion and theology is important, though I fail to see why it should be an occasion for flippancy with regard to "theological quandaries." Do not theological quandaries arise from religious ones, from trying to justify the ways of God to man, from trying to explain how it is that the wicked prosper and the good perish? In any case, from the fact that religion is not identical with theology it does not follow that religion is everything that theology is not. And that is what Dr. Cronbach seems perilously close to asserting when he parcels out religion to the various arts and sciences.

Actually, the history of Western civilization is precisely the opposite of Dr. Cronbach's description of it: from an original impingement of the sacred upon all the arts of life, we have seen the arts develop into autonomous, secular, non-sacred activities, and the sacred has become—the specifically religious. Dr. Cronbach's desire to reincorporate the secular into the sacred is a noble one, but it cannot be achieved by deciding to call things sacred when they are not so in fact.

It is pointless to quarrel with Drs. Cronbach and Gittelsohn as to what psychoanalysis *really* is. I had taken it for what Freud said it was. Drs. Cronbach and Gittelsohn prefer other authorities. A conflict of authorities, matching quotation against quotation, would be sterile. But there is one point where the possibility of reconciling psychoanalysis with religion is crucially posed: the origin of the belief in God. Here, even the post-Freudian schools of psychoanalysis will admit, if pressed, that they cannot in all good scientific conscience regard the religious experience as a genuine confrontation of the divine. They must reduce the experience to something "psychic," "mental"—in other words, an "illusion." The only psychoanalytical theory I know of that has tried to accept religion on its own terms (unsuccessfully, to my mind) is that of Jung and his followers. It is also the only theory I know of that finds no echo in the rabbinate.

As with psychoanalysis, so with religion: it is fruitless to argue over definitions. Drs. Cronbach and Gittelsohn find my definition primitive and retrograde. I find theirs devoid of spiritual content. Dr. Cronbach concedes some utility to "the word 'God' "—I do wish he had said something about His reality. Dr. Gittelsohn, on the other hand, assures us positively that "God's word is a progressive, growing, never-ending revelation." This is either a genuine theological statement (of a Hegelian cast) or else an empty metaphor. In the context of his letter, it does not look to me to be the former.

A final point: Dr. Gittelsohn suggests that Freud's attack on religion may have been motivated by his "unconscious resentment against being a Jew." This is a common and irresponsible perversion of the psychoanalytic method. To deny that a Jew can be an atheist except through "self-hate" is to substitute mud-slinging for intelligent discussion.

Irving Kristol

New York City

Another View

To the Editor of Commentary:

Irving Kristol in his excellent article "God and the Psychoanalysts" calls attention to the odd alliance between religion and the psychoanalysts, recently so fervently praised and recommended by certain theologians. In reading *Peace of Mind*, I received the impression that religiosity was essentially conceived as a means to render man free from mental suffering, fear, and anxiety, which are an obstacle to the development of a natural joy in life. . . . But Mr. Kristol is completely right in insisting that the first and most important question is not whether religion makes us happy but whether it is true. . . . If the psychoanalytical interpretation of the origin of religion is correct, then piety indeed is a great error. . . .

We certainly do not long for the return of the times in which the established church (and occasionally the synagogue, too) controlled science. But we should agree with Mr. Kristol that the theologians should at least take the question of truth seriously. This means that they should teach that belief has by no means the primary purpose of making man happy, but rather of leading him to the divine truth which sometimes may be very bitter. The blissfulness which emerges from serious piety is in many important respects different from the happiness attained by psychiatric or psychoanalytical methods. Of course, religion intends to grant bliss—but such a one as can be acquired only by devotion to God.

And He may lead man to the highest goal through painful sufferings and even martyrdom. That, too, is happiness for the believer, but it is quite different from the comfortable state of mind psychological treatment attempts to provide. . . .

Max Wiener

New York City

The Labor Zionists and Halutziut

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have read with surprise a statement in Arthur Hertzberg's article, in your October issue, that "The Labor Zionists, though encouraging *halutziut* as a firm part of their traditional work, did not mention it at all in their declaration"—that is, in the declaration of the National Assembly for Labor Israel.

Since I had something to do with drafting the document referred to, it would be a source of chagrin to find that this particular item had been left out.

But on examining the text of the declaration I find it contains the following: "A great voluntary mobilization of the Israeli labor movement is necessary, to colonize waste places and devise forms for absorbing the refugees into the cooperative, dynamic structure of Israel. In this effort *the manpower and skill of Jewry in the free democracies* must play their part as *halutzim*, as they did in the military defense of Israel. With the aid of the United States Government, *American Jewry in particular* can carry out in Israel a practical implementation of President Truman's 'Bold New Program.'" (My italics.)

The National Assembly's statement also contains the following: "The establishment of the State of Israel makes possible the continued pursuit, on an unprecedented scale, of the Zionist aim of bringing to Israel those Jews who cannot *or do not wish to remain in the Diaspora*. This aim remains, as before, the responsibility of the whole Jewish people, and the huge task of providing the necessary finances *and skills*, and preserving the necessary conditions for its success, is a joint responsibility of the State of Israel and Jewry in other countries." (My italics.)

Ben Halpern

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Ben Halpern is too adept a debater not to be aware that, for all its technical correctness, his letter is a trifle disingenuous. As a matter of simple fact I must offer him and the other framers of the National Assembly's declaration my regrets and apologies. What I should have written, in the allusion to their deliberations, was "The Labor Zionists, though encouraging *halutziut* is a firm part of their traditional work, mention it without great emphasis in their declaration."

Nonetheless, the impasse about *halutziut* that I described briefly in the original article is still with us and the fundamental issue is being evaded. The text from which Mr. Halpern is quoting is much more eloquent in repeating time-honored re-dedications to economic aid for Israel and concern for refugees. Indeed the very artillery that he marshals is not quite precise in its aim. American Labor Zionism seems to envision a *halutziut* from this country parallel to the direct contribution of military effectives from the United States to Israel's war of survival. If so, as Mr. Halpern has good reason to know, that effort was quite small and much criticized in Israel for that very reason. Israel will not be satisfied with that kind of *halutziut*.

Mr. Halpern quotes the phrase about bringing "those who do not wish to remain" in the Diaspora to Israel. This is precisely the issue. Certainly Zionism does not have to give assurances that it will aid anyone who decides for *aliyah* by his own choice. What its Diaspora segment must decide is whether actively to promote and lead a movement for complete exodus, as it is increasingly being called to do by Israel.

I shall not belabor the point by quoting again in this connection the recent and by now famous utterance of Mr. Ben Gurion, concerning his intention to promote a mass *aliyah* of at least the youth from democratic lands. This statement of the Prime Minister's has incidentally recently been watered down in his behalf in an authorized explanation by Monroe Goldwater of the UJA. Surely, however, Mr. Halpern has read Dr. Nathan Rotenstreich's article in the October issue of *Jewish Frontier*. Dr. Rotenstreich, as an Israeli Laborite, takes issue with Dr. M. M. Kaplan's program speech at the National Assembly in question:

"Most surprising is the fact that Professor Kaplan did not include among the distinguishing features of revolutionary Zionism its most essential element, precisely the idea of auto-emancipation. . . . This effort in essence involves the transfer of Jews from their present domiciles for it aims at altering the basis of their life in the most elementary sense, that is, altering its territorial base. Auto-emancipation and the withdrawal from the Diaspora are twin ideas. . . ."

Here is a position clearly stated, the complete denial of the Diaspora and a call to organize an active dissatisfaction with it ("auto-emancipation") leading towards emigration to Israel. The impasse before American Zionism is whether to accept or reject this reaffirmation of the Herzlian position—and a few careful words of encouragement to very small scale *halutziut* is in reality an evasion of the issue.

Arthur Hertzberg

Nashville, Tennessee

Religion in Literature

To the Editor of Commentary:

Leslie Fiedler, in his review of Philip Rahv's *Image and Idea* in the November number, gives us to understand that a critic who relies upon naturalist assumptions is incapable of adequately understanding the work of writers animated by religious faith: ". . . Rahv's critical system, with its fundamental reliance upon naturalist assumptions, will not permit him to comprehend fully the very writers of whom he has become a leading advocate. . . ." The logical and unavoidable implication of this statement—which is substantiated by no evidence, since Mr. Fiedler does not show us who *has* fully comprehended the writers in question—is that like can only criticize like and that the best criticism is a homologue of its object. Accordingly, the supernaturalist critic should keep his hands off irreligious writers like Goethe, Keats, Shelley, Kleist, Heine, Mallarmé, Valéry, Gide, Carducci, Leopardi, Yeats, Henry James, Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, etc., etc., while the naturalist critic, in view of the fact that most of the past belongs to religion, should not venture back beyond the middle of the 18th century.

I know that Mr. Fiedler takes his cue from T. S. Eliot's conclusion that to share a writer's beliefs increases the enjoyment of his work. I myself do not quite agree with this, but I am willing to grant it for the sake of argument and to point out merely that enjoyment is not identical with understanding. The supernaturalist critic who enjoys Dante to the maximum may miss what the naturalist critic, who sees beyond religion to its psychological context, perceives. Thus T. S. Eliot himself wrote what is perhaps the most illuminating appreciation of those eminently religious poets, the English metaphysicals, before he adopted his present religious position (which in itself seems to have been of very doubtful benefit to his work as either critic or poet). I could offer further instances to refute Mr. Fiedler but lack of space prevents me.

Another implication of Mr. Fiedler's statement, taken together with his concluding remark, "that no critical approach can outlive the historical moment that evokes it," is that one's philosophical position is refuted for the purposes of art and literary criticism by the superior creativity during one's own age of those with a different position; that if the naturalist critic wants to understand, for instance, the latest literature of the present moment, he had better change his philosophical position, or else withdraw—as if, say, a contemporary of Homer's who wanted to practice literary criticism but had abandoned polytheism would have had to return to it in order to keep up with and explain the Iliad. One sees that Mr. Fiedler's position is in itself neither naturalist nor supernaturalist but essentially opportunist.

What Mr. Fiedler objects to in Mr. Rahv's "critical system" is its failure to keep up with the latest trends (in indicating the supernaturalist direction of the present latest trend, Mr. Fiedler unwarrantedly slips James and Kafka in among the religious writers) and what he asks of literary criticism is that it co-ordinate itself with those trends, whether they go "backward" or "forward." As if, for instance, Goethe's view of the German Romantic writers was superseded by the view of the Romantic critics themselves simply because Goethe's assumptions belonged to an earlier trend.

I think Mr. Fiedler ought to be more careful. If we take him on his own terms, he as a fiction-writer ought to be given pause by the irreligiousness of such of his contemporaries as Faulkner, Gide, Mann, Hemingway, Forster, etc.

Clement Greenberg

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I find in Mr. Greenberg's letter an awareness of one very real difference between us, and several mistaken notions of what I was trying to say. It is a fair restatement of my position to say "the best criticism is a homologue of its object." This, I should think, would be universally accepted. It does *not*, of course, follow that "like can only criticize like," and I have in no way implied it. Many *partial* insights into works of art may be found in critics only partially sympathetic to the views expressed in such works; but to "comprehend *fully*" any work, one must have read it with the sort of commitment to its *mythos* that is inhibited by a fundamental difference of belief. There is naturally no question of the "right" of a critic to deal with any writer he may choose to examine, no matter what their doctrinal differences; but one should not be scandalized at a prediction that the critic will be limited by those differences. This is especially true in the case of non-formalist, "ideological" critics like Philip Rahv.

There are two apt bits of evidence in Mr. Greenberg's letter itself, illustrating the kinds of errors into which a naturalist may fall in the face of supernaturalist literature. The first is "kidnaping": attempting to claim for his own camp writers whom he admires, but whose ideas seem to him "wrong." This Mr. Greenberg does with Kafka (whom, by the way, I listed in my review with James not among the "religious," but with the "palefaces," quite another matter) and with Yeats. Not to acknowledge these two, to begin with, as "supernaturalists" is to vitiate all further critical comment.

The second error arises out of the assumption that the naturalist "sees beyond religion to its psychological context," and leads to a reduction of more complex mythical structures to less complex ones, e.g., Dante's metaphysics to Freudianism or behaviorism. The critic is always at a disadvantage beside a work of art; but the provincial arrogance of naturalism ("*beyond* religion"!) and its flatness put it at an especial disadvantage.

From the beginning of his third paragraph on, everything Mr. Greenberg asserts is irrelevant to what I have written. I maintained simply that different generations require different critical approaches in accord with their differing world-outlooks; and that it was, therefore, foolish to reproach Mr. Rahv, for instance, for failing to achieve a method congenial to a younger group of critics, after producing a body of work important in its own period. Within the short time Mr. Rahv has been writing, there has occurred, I believe, a crucial break between generations, a shift-over to a new *Anschauung* that demands a new criticism, whose assumptions and methods are not those of Mr. Rahv.

I do not want, however, to end on a note of dissent. The disagreements between Mr. Greenberg and me are real and important; but I think we should conclude, at least, by remembering our area of agreement, where we share (against the Howard Mumford Joneses of the world) a real respect for Mr. Rahv's acute insights into some of the basic problems and processes of American literary life.

Leslie A. Fiedler

Montana State University
Missoula, Montana

Judaic Lore in Heine

To the Editor of Commentary:

I should like to convey my appreciation to David Daiches for the fine review of my study

Judaic Lore in Heine which he wrote for the October issue of COMMENTARY. He shows a thorough knowledge of the subject and a keen understanding of the problems the work has set out to solve.

However, Dr. Daiches has charged me with some inaccuracies of which I am not guilty. Thus he claims: "But Dr. Tabak might have noted that the first name of the author of the hymn is indicated by an acrostic. . . . " It seems that Dr. Daiches has overlooked my prefatory note (page 10) where I clearly state: "for the authorship of 'Lecho Dodi' is indicated in acrostics as 'Shlomo Halevi.'"

Again, Dr. Daiches questions the correctness of the appellation "Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden." May I point out that Heine, who was secretary of the organization, used both names interchangeably and both are therefore to be regarded as correct? I refer Dr. Daiches to page 21 of my study for proof of my contention.

ISRAEL TABAK

Baltimore, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is perfectly true that Dr. Tabak mentions that the authorship of "Lecho Dodi" is indicated in acrostics. This, however, is on page 11 of his book (not page 10), whereas the passage on which I commented was on page 90. While admitting that I failed to remember that he had made the point some eighty pages earlier, I think the fact that the same question is discussed in two different parts of the book, and on each occasion in a somewhat fragmentary way, bears out the contention I made in my review that the work is not as well organized as it might be, nor are the implications of the facts drawn together and made clear.

As for *des Judentums* and *der Juden*: my query there was a genuine appeal for information. My own recollection was of the latter usage, and Dr. Tabak used mostly the latter, but once or twice the former. I am glad to learn that the organization itself used both names interchangeably: that clears up the mystery and answers my question. But Dr. Tabak might have mentioned the fact in his book.

DAVID DAICHES

Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

Low Life and High Life

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I heartily enjoyed the vivid and competent article of Mr. Klonsky on his Paris experiences ["On the Margin in France," in the November COMMENTARY]. However, it contains some serious mistakes, quite shocking for a French reader.

1. The bones of Victor Hugo would shatter in his grave, did he know what sense Mr. Klonsky attributes to the word *"Gavroche."* The name of Gavroche, a hero of *Les Misérables*, has grown into a nickname for a young and daring boy of the Paris slums. Witty and kind-hearted, Gavroche is honest, and does not indulge in finance high or low; in no way does the term apply to a "street-Arab" in the figurative or literal sense of the word.

2. "B.O.F." (Beurre, Oeufs, Fromage) designates a grocer or a dairyman grown rich during the war years, while trafficking in the food black market. Designating a typical figure of present French life, the expression can by no means be applied to an American tourist or a foreigner.

3. The French tobacco monopoly, too, might rightly feel offended by Mr. Klonsky's article. They have produced since the 30's a brand of cigarettes called "Balto," which is aimed at satisfying the lovers of the sweet American aroma. Their "High Life" brand never had any such pretensions.

Such are the three improprieties which crept into the otherwise brilliant essay.

LEON POLIAKOV

Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine
Paris, France

What Makes Richmond Run

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Congratulations on publishing "Slow Revolution in Richmond, Va." by David and Adele Bernstein [in the December issue]. As a description of a Jewish community in flux, the Bernsteins' article stands out for its clear-cut analysis and excellent depiction of the dynamic factors in Jewish community life. Although this article does not pretend to be a full-scale "scientific" analysis of Richmond, it seems to me to come closer to this objective than do many of the more pretentious studies. The authors have succeeded in cutting through the historical and sociological underbrush and consequently are able to tell us what in reality "makes Richmond run." The article is therefore a contribution to our "self-understanding."

Let us have more studies of American Jewish communities done with the same candor.

MARSHALL SKLARE

Bronx, New York

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Stalin's Political Contribution

STALIN: A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY. By ISAAC DEUTSCHER. Oxford. 600 pp. $5.00.

Reviewed by FRANZ BORKENAU

IF THE image we have of Stalin is blurred and distorted, it is certainly no fault of the historians. Political figures have always had their friends and enemies; but until the advent of totalitarianism, opposing interpretations were available from which the historian could achieve a more or less exact picture—for all their bias, these interpretations had real value as historical evidence. In Stalin's case, Communist interpreters, in representing his historical role, hew strictly to the line laid down in the officially approved *Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. This is a work that Stalin himself helped to write and in which all the fairy tales of the Moscow trials are repeated. Its historical value is exactly nil.

For this reason, in seeking the truth about Stalin we are forced to rely almost exclusively on the testimony of his bitterest opponents for basic historical material. We find it in the works of such people as Boris Souvarine and Victor Serge, and pre-eminently in Leon Trotsky's unfinished life of Stalin. Evidence of this kind, though factually not false, is one-sided. How could it be otherwise? Trotsky's estimate of Stalin, so far as its main features are concerned, plainly misses the mark, politically as well as psychologically, because only blind hatred could lead a man to describe Stalin as a "mediocrity." The totalitarian dictatorship is not, as Trotsky claims, a perversion of the Bolshevik revolution, but the inevitable consequence of Leninist theory and practice, which Trotsky himself supported. And the simple fact that Stalin was able to keep himself in power through the gigantic crises of collectivization and industrialization, the purges, and the war, invalidates Trotsky's charge of mediocrity. His conception of Stalin has to be completely revised.

Isaac Deutscher's book claims, though not explicitly, to carry out this revision. The author makes no attempt to deny the enormous and notorious crimes that Stalin has committed. But in mitigation he pleads the revolutionary and military circumstances under which the Soviet dictator has had to make his way, and asks for recognition of Stalin's creative accomplishments in transforming Russia into a modern socialist state.

IN his final remarks, Deutscher enunciates the basic ideas of his work:

"Hitler was the leader of a sterile counter-revolution, while Stalin has been the leader and the exploiter of a tragic, self-contradictory but creative revolution. Like Cromwell, Robespierre, and Napoleon he started as the servant of an insurgent people and made himself its master. Like Cromwell he embodies the continuity of the revolution through all its phases and metamorphoses, although his role was less prominent in the first phase. Like Robespierre he has bled white his own party; and like Napoleon he has built his half-conservative and half-revolutionary empire and carried revolution beyond the frontiers of his country. The better part of Stalin's work is as certain to outlast Stalin himself as the better parts of the work of Cromwell and Napoleon have outlasted them. But in order to save it for the future and to give to it its full value, history may yet have to cleanse and reshape Stalin's work as sternly as it once cleansed and reshaped the work of the English revolution after Cromwell and of the French after Napoleon."

The analogy is attractive. Every revolution has had its Jacobin and Napoleonic phases, with transitional periods in between, and culminating in a counter-revolution: the comparison of Stalin with Napoleon is very apt. And yet there is an element surreptitiously introduced into the analogy which invalidates it. You can make a valid comparison of Stalin with Cromwell and Napoleon only if you keep in mind the particular place each occupied in the revolutionary cycle. All three represent the "Napoleonic" phase—but then isn't Robespierre out of place? Robespierre represents the "Jacobin" phase, the typically short-lived climax of the popular revolution *from below*, which is entirely different from the Napoleonic dictatorship *from above*. Then how has Robespierre got into the analogy in the first place? Obviously, only because neither Cromwell nor Napoleon can furnish a parallel to Stalin's blood-baths. The purges, however, are a central and characteristic feature of Stalin's political role.

The true analogue to the Jacobin terror of the French Revolution is in the terror of the Russian Civil War of 1918-1920. The distinction Deutscher makes between the two—Robespierre terrorized his own party and Lenin terrorized the parties of the opposition—does not hold up. The differences separating Robespierre from the half-communistic Parisian commune on the one hand and the close-knit capitalist groups of Dantonists on the other (both of which were members of the Jacobin party), were greater and not less than those separating Lenin from the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The terror practiced by Robespierre and Lenin were alike in principle, whereas Stalin's terror was and is of an entirely different kind. The Stalinist terror developed in the *late phase* of the revolution. The most frightful horrors of the Civil War were let loose again—indeed were far exceeded—at a time when the dictatorship had been fully stabilized. Moreover, the terror proved to be not a passing episode but a permanent institution of the Stalinist dictatorship, an institution in which it is possible to detect slight variations but never any decisive changes. This most striking and abhorrent feature of the Russian Revolution, Deutscher has dissembled.

Deutscher excuses these horrors for the sake of the economic revival which they presumably served. Let us suppose that this excuse is justified so far as it concerns the "second revolution" of the first Five Year Plan (though even here, such is not the case), so far, that is, as it was necessary for the complete expropriation of the kulaks and the first great wave of industrialization. In that case the terror should have ended with the end of the acutest phase of the upheaval, that is, around 1933—which is, in fact, what had been expected by many observers. But the most dreadful stages of the terror actually took place long after this. In the Soviet Union today the terror has nothing at all to do with social transformations. As in the case of National Socialism, and for the very same reasons, it is a permanent institution—it is the regime itself. Deutscher's whole argument is an effort to divert the reader from this fact. He has no trouble in discovering a "social revolution" where none existed or could exist.

This is evident, to cite a particularly crass example, in his treatment of the devastation caused by Russian domination in the satellite states. Deutscher, characteristically calling a spade a spade so as then to turn his back upon it the more quickly, says that "Stalin rendered the peoples of Eastern Europe 'services, of which it is difficult to overrate either the wickedness or the utility,' to paraphrase Macaulay's verdict on an English statesman." He talks about the feudal backwardness of this region and concludes from this:

"It may well be that for its peoples the only chance of breaking out of their impasse lay in a *coup de force* such as that to which Stalin goaded them. In Poland and Hungary the Communist-inspired land reform fulfilled, perhaps imperfectly, a dream of many generations of peasants and intellectuals. All over Eastern Europe the Communists, having nationalized the main industries, vigorously promoted plans for industrialization and full employment such as were beyond the material resources and the wit of 'private enterprise,' notoriously poor in capital, skill, and enterprise. With fresh zeal and ambition they took to hard educational work, trying to undo the age-old negligence of previous rulers. They did much to calm nationalist vendettas and to promote co-operation between their peoples. In a word, they opened before Eastern Europe broad vistas of common reform and advancement."

In the vague generality of this picture, the all-important details of historical reality are lost sight of. Among the countries presumably liberated from feudalism, which are lumped together without distinction, there is, for instance, Czechoslovakia, a thoroughly democratic country (and not a "people's democracy") that did not need then to be liberated from feudalism, although it now needs very much to be liberated from Stalinist despotism. Deutscher also omits to mention the bitter resistance the Rumanian and Yugoslav peasants offered to their respective Communist regimes. In Rumania,

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Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia there were for the most part no important large estates to be divided up; nor did the feudalism Deutscher cites in extenuation of Stalin's methods any longer exist in these three countries—the sole object of the fear and hatred of these peoples are the Communists and their plans for collectivization. It fits the character of Deutscher's argument that not once in his treatment of the Soviet satellites of Eastern Europe does Tito's name appear.

I HAVE cited Deutscher's treatment of Soviet policy in Eastern Europe to show how essential facts and distinctions are obscured to support the thesis of the possibly creative and progressive character of Stalinist politics. There are similar instances to be found in Deutscher's account of every important phase of Stalin's life, so that his version of events needs to be scrutinized point for point. I shall content myself with only a few such points.

Speaking of the forced collectivization in 1930, Deutscher gives the impression that the peasants tried to exploit the city by demanding unheard-of prices for their produce. Nowhere in Deutscher's book is there any mention of the economic "scissors"—the key word in all Bolshevik party discussions in the second half of the 20's. By "scissors" was meant the sharper and sharper divergence of industrial and agricultural prices, to the disadvantage of the latter. In the end the peasants were able to purchase virtually nothing with the money they realized from the sale of their products. Finally they rebelled and refused to deliver up their produce to the authorities, paying for this rebellion by loss of ownership of their land, by millions of dead and deported.

Deutscher persistently tries to explain the course of Stalin's career as being directed by the impulse of the moment or as the accidents of a particular situation. According to him, it was not Stalin's efforts to dominate the party apparatus behind Lenin's back that provoked the conflict between the two, but a disagreement over constitutional reform; it was not Stalin's attempt to usurp exclusive power that led to the conflict with Zinoviev and Kamenev; it was the unexpected advent of the agrarian crisis, and only secondarily a struggle for power, that brought about the conflict with Bukharin and Rykov. The extermination of the well-to-do peasants was not a campaign planned in advance against an entire social stratum that had dared to oppose Stalin, but had come about as if spontaneously, out of the intoxication induced by the first successes of collectivization. After the war, the "people's democracy" established in the Soviet satellite states was not a step toward absolute Stalinist rule, but was sincerely intended to be a permanent system for the sharing of power by several parties.

THE test of such a conception is the great purges and public trials of 1936-1938. They are the most terrible and puzzling part of Stalin's biography; the correct interpretation of Stalin's personality and of the Stalinist regime depends upon the dissipation of the obscurity surrounding them. Deutscher adduces three causes in explanation of the purge: the assassination of the Leningrad party chief Kirov, who hadn't taken proper precautions for his safety; Trotsky's empty boasting about the strength of his underground organization inside the Soviet Union; and Stalin's fear that the broken leaders of the right- and left-wing oppositions might yet prove dangerous in the event of a war.

Now obviously, if Stalin, because of a single political assassination, or because of a foolish article in an opposition sheet printed outside Russia, sent hundreds of thousands to their death, and millions to the living death of the labor camps, he must have been a madman. Nor did the fear of a conspiracy on the part of a few "old Bolsheviks" necessitate such a radical, large-scale action. What were the real causes behind the Moscow trials? There are documents bearing on this which Deutscher never mentions.

The most important piece of evidence we have on the purges is the anonymous (but undoubtedly authentic) *Letter of an Old Bolshevik,* which Macmillan published in England and America in 1937. The "Old Bolshevik" and Deutscher both agree that a policy of relative mildness and reconciliation prevailed in the period before the purges. The principal representative of this policy was Sergei Kirov, who was assassinated in 1934. But whereas Deutscher says no more than this, the "Old Bolshevik" goes on. It was not merely, he reports, that Kirov had a personal predilection for mildness. On the contrary, during the first Five Year Plan he had displayed extreme harshness. But in Kirov's view, after the successes of socialist industrialization all justification for a terroristic dictatorship had vanished. If his view had prevailed, it would have meant an end to the power of the GPU. Like every dictatorial secret police the world over, the GPU acted to meet this threat to its existence—it took care that Kirov should be assassinated by a revolutionary student.

The "Old Bolshevik" describes in detail how the GPU took advantage of Kirov's protests against excessive security measures to leave him entirely without protection; how the assassin preached, *urbi et orbi,* the necessity of political assassination under the very eyes of the GPU without being arrested. He describes, naming names, how the head of the commission of investigation diverted attention from the murder itself to its factitious "deeper causes." Deutscher says that the assassin admitted to being a follower of "Zinovievism." He is repeating a Stalinist invention. Zinoviev had long ago kissed the rod, and "Zinovievism" no longer existed. The "Old Bolshevik" speaks convincingly, not of the assassin's avowal of Zinovievism, but of the exertions of the GPU to prove that every section of the former opposition, indeed the entire Bolshevik old guard—though of course chiefly the former Leningrad Opposition (Zinoviev and his friends)—were responsible for the assassination. In this way the secret police thwarted the policy of reconciliation and won Stalin over to continued terror.

So the "Old Bolshevik." Deutscher does not reject his account on this or that ground—he simply passes over it in silence.

DEUTSCHER is silent too about one of the most important sources bearing on the execution of the Chief of the General Staff, Tukachevsky, and his group.

He writes that "all non-Stalinist versions concur in the following: the generals did indeed plan a *coup d'état.* This they did from their own motives, and on their own initiative, not in compact with any foreign power. The main part of the coup was to be a palace revolt in the Kremlin, culminating in the assassination of Stalin. A decisive military operation outside the Kremlin, an assault on the headquarters of the GPU, was also prepared."

Deutscher's account means nothing else than that the official Soviet declarations were completely correct. Which is to say, that virtually the entire leadership of the Red Army was involved in a widespread conspiracy which the GPU was able to discover and frustrate only at the last minute. Even under the fantastic conditions prevailing in Stalin's Russia this would seem to be unthinkable. As usual, Deutscher gives none of his sources. In a footnote he refers to the absence of any Nazi evidence bearing on the Tukachevsky trial, but he is mistaken. There are any number of witnesses (Gisevius among others) to the fact that Hitler as well as Heydrich boasted to leading party people and to the generals of deceiving the GPU with planted evidence and so encompassing the destruction of the Russian high command. I shall not try to do what in all likelihood can never be done, clarify all the details of this affair. But in so obscure a matter the smallest piece of evidence is important—how much more so the well-supported and in itself in no way improbable charge that, among others, the Gestapo too had a hand in it?

THERE is probably only one thing that can be said with confidence: the real, if paradoxical, cause of the mass executions was the preceding attempt at a relaxation of the terror. Though arrested in its very beginnings, this attempt had already provoked such resistance on the part of the secret police and of the majority of the Stalinist apparatus that a fearful holocaust was its only result. The danger of war was only a pretext. The terror itself begot further terror. The easing of the objective situation did not tend to moderate but rather for the first time gave free rein to the terror. Every other concrete political task was subordinated to it. *For terror—to employ the language of Hegelianism—is the all-embracing law of the Stalinist regime. That it can come to a peaceful and honest understanding with no one and with nothing, that it cannot live without fresh blood and fresh enemies—if possible, real enemies, if need be, invented ones—is the fundamental law of Stalinism.*

This is why Deutscher's view of Russia's future—that it is passing through a typical revolutionary cycle, ultimately to evolve into a peaceful and normal society—is so false. It is possible to separate the fate of the Napoleonic Empire from the fate of France—the achievements of the revolutionary and Napoleonic periods are preserved, though the regime has passed away. But it is more than doubtful that the fate of Russia, even if Stalin should die a natural death, could be separated from the fate of Stalinism. The inner law of the Stalinist terror, no less than that of the Nazi terror, leads (if more slowly in the Soviet Union than in Germany) to a total catastrophe not only for the terroristic regime, but also for the country ruled by it. Only an internal revolution could preserve Russia from such a fate—but, as in the case of Germany, one must be sceptical about the possibilities of such a revolution. Deutscher, instead of this disquieting prospect, suggests one that is relatively normal and innocuous—that is the danger of his book.

The Yiddish Language

College Yiddish. By Uriel Weinreich. Yiddish Scientific Institute—Yivo. 397 pp. $4.50.

Yiddish for Adults. By Nathaniel Buchwald. The Book League of the Jewish Peoples Fraternal Order. 232 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by Ralph Weiman

Jewish scholars have played a prominent role in the development of modern linguistic science and have written some of the best descriptive grammars as well as some of the best studies in the psychology and sociology of language. Very few of these scholars have, however, turned their attention to Yiddish or Hebrew, although both languages offer important problems for linguistic research. For example, both contain a high degree of foreign borrowings: Yiddish has a Germanic base with a large number of borrowings from Hebrew and the Slavic languages; modern Hebrew has a Semitic base with extensive borrowings from the Indo-European languages. In fact, Hebrew offers a rather rare example of a language of one family (Semitic) which has taken over in large measure the syntax of another family (Indo-European). Yiddish and Hebrew therefore afford an excellent opportunity to study the process by which foreign elements are borrowed by a language and are adapted to the native structure.

Yiddish and Hebrew are also extremely interesting from the standpoint of linguistic sociology and psychology. In the case of Yiddish we can study the process by which a standard language emerges; since standard or literary Yiddish developed in the latter part of the last century we are still in a good position to investigate the factors which determined the particular form it assumed. In the case of Hebrew we are able to study the transformation of a written language into an everyday spoken language and to observe the emergence under our eyes of various norms of usage ("correct" and "incorrect," colloquial and literary, etc.) and of specialized forms of language (technical terminologies, professional jargons, slang, children's language, etc.).

Since few linguistic specialists have worked in the field of Yiddish or Hebrew we have had no grammars in these languages comparable to those which exist for the other modern languages. Those desiring to take up the study of Yiddish or Hebrew have had to content themselves with grammars and textbooks which represent the stage reached by French, Spanish, or German grammars a decade or more ago. We are therefore very fortunate in now having an introduction to Yiddish by a scholar thoroughly trained in modern linguistic analysis. *College Yiddish* by Uriel Weinreich is the first textbook in Yiddish or Hebrew which can compare favorably both in content and organization with the best textbooks in the other modern languages.

Each lesson in *College Yiddish* consists of a short reading selection with an accompanying vocabulary divided into an "active" list (important words which should become part of the student's active vocabulary) and a "passive" list (less important words which it is sufficient for him to be able to recognize). Then follows a section which treats the important grammatical features occurring in the reading selection. (All the grammatical points are also arranged systematically in an appendix called "Synopsis of Grammar.") After each grammatical discussion there are exercises on the vocabulary and grammar of the particular lesson. Finally there is a short section in English dealing with some aspect of the Yiddish language or of Jewish life. Every fifth lesson consists of a series of review exercises on the content of the preceding chapters.

College Yiddish thus combines what is known as the "grammatical approach" and the "cultural approach." The grammatical explanations reflect the author's training in linguistic analysis; they give a very concise description of Yiddish structure as compared with English. However, some of these sections, though excellent in themselves, appear a little out of place in a text intended for beginners. The space might have been more profitably devoted, for example, to additional exercises on the reading of Yiddish. There is only one short exercise on reading the alphabet, despite the fact that the beginner has to learn not only a new alphabet (with different printed and cursive forms) but two different spelling systems—one used for Yiddish words and one used for Hebrew ones.

The current practice in beginners' texts is to work with a small controlled vocabulary and a small number of the most important grammatical items and to keep repeating them at frequent intervals; new words and grammatical features are introduced only after the preceding ones have been thoroughly learned. The number of words and grammatical details introduced in *College Yiddish* is much higher than one finds in first-year texts in the other modern languages. It might of course be argued that many of the students studying Yiddish are likely to know some Yiddish to start with and that the higher vocabulary load and the more extensive grammatical coverage are consequently justified. Such students, however, really need a special review grammar. Those beginning the study of Yiddish would probably profit more from a text which contained fewer lexical and grammatical items and provided for more repetition of the most important ones.

Emphasis has been placed in recent years on using language texts as an introduction to a nation's history and culture as well as to its language. *College Yiddish* employs the cultural approach so successfully that it bears comparison with the very best that has been achieved in this field. The reading selections are all on an adult level and are written in a lively style; they make abundant use—as is only appropriate in a book dealing with Yiddish—of folk humor and folk sayings. Most of them cover some aspect of Yiddish or of Jewish history and literature; additional aspects are treated in the form of brief essays in English at the end of each lesson. *College Yiddish* thus serves as a well-rounded introduction to Jewish culture. It deals with aspects of Yiddish (the origin, history, and geographical spread of Yiddish; the dialects and the standard language; Yiddish compared with English and German; the Hebrew element in Yiddish; Yiddish in America), of Jewish life and culture (Jewish humor, proverbs, and folksongs; Jewish holidays; Jewish family names; the Jewish calendar; Jewish education), of Jewish literature (history of the older literature; the Jewish classical writers;

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current Jewish literature), and of Jewish history in general (Jewish immigrations; fate of European Jews in World War II), etc. A glossary contains a number of supplementary reading selections from Mendele, Sholem Aleichem, Peretz, and others.

College Yiddish is thus of interest not only to those beginning the study of Yiddish but also to those who wish to systematize their knowledge of the language or to learn more about the history and development of Yiddish literature. The book is carefully edited and a good deal of attention has been paid to its typographical appearance—not unimportant considerations in a language textbook. The author and the Yiddish Scientific Institute, which published *College Yiddish,* have performed a valuable service in providing us at last with an introduction to Yiddish which is completely modern in its approach and presentation.

YIDDISH FOR ADULTS by Nathaniel Buchwald falls into the category of "practical grammars." Its purpose is to provide a brief introduction to the rudiments of Yiddish. It does not attempt, as does *College Yiddish,* to give a full and organized presentation of the grammatical structure of Yiddish or to provide an introduction to Yiddish culture of the past and present. The grammatical treatment in *College Yiddish* is so excellent that *Yiddish for Adults* suffers by comparison, but the latter is a much easier book for beginners. The author works with a small but well-selected vocabulary and with a limited number of the most important grammatical elements.

The best feature of *Yiddish for Adults* is that the author constantly has his student in mind. His teaching experience has made him aware of the chief difficulties that beginning students have with Yiddish and he has done his best to help them over the stumbling blocks. The reading of Yiddish is treated at considerable length and a great many reading exercises are provided. Throughout the book Hebrew words are given not only in the Hebrew spelling but are transcribed into the Yiddish spelling system as well, so that the student is never in doubt as to the pronunciation of the Hebrew words which occur in the text. The first lessons consist of simple phrases and sentences and only after the student has mastered these are connected reading selections introduced. Towards the end of the book there are excerpts from Yiddish literature, but these too have been carefully selected for the simplicity of their style.

All in all, *Yiddish for Adults* admirably serves its special purpose of teaching adults the basic elements of Yiddish. It is, however, limited in scope and the reader will certainly want to go on to *College Yiddish* for a fuller and more systematic treatment of the grammar and for material on the development of Jewish culture.

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The "Liberal" in the Novel

THE SURE THING. By MERLE MILLER. William Sloane. 341 pp. $3.00.

THE SEA CHANGE. By NIGEL DENNIS. Houghton Mifflin. 372 pp. $3.50.

THE OASIS. By MARY McCARTHY. Random House. 181 pp. $2.00.

Reviewed by ISA KAPP

UNTIL fairly recently—when Lionel Trilling's *The Middle of the Journey* marked a change in mood—novelists saw the American liberalism of the 30's as a purely political phenomenon. *The Sea Change* and *The Oasis,* following Mr. Trilling, reflect a trend of greater concern with morality than politics, with character than class, and describe the devouring shadow that the liberalism of the 30's has thrown on aesthetics, culture, even private emotions. *The Sure Thing,* on the other hand, expresses with vulgar innocence the very attitudes they excoriate.

Merle Miller's book assumes that the federal loyalty purge will snap crisply into fiction and stroke many a sense of outraged virtue. Its hero, who in a moment of mistaken idealism joined the Communist party, loses his job at the State Department. His only clear feeling is that he has been victimized for belonging to what was once the "right" side. He neither sees nor wants to see the true meaning of his own political past. In his martyrdom, such exact knowledge comes to seem irrelevant, even shameful, and a thoughtless uprightness blazes out as the prime American virtue. The Spanish

Civil War is not an assimilated historical experience, but a nostalgic password. Thus, the liberalism of *The Sure Thing* is chiefly interesting because of the way it disinherits its radical youth, sloughs off everything that is harsh or questionable, and puts its protest against the Congressional investigations in the form of an elaborate sulk.

Nigel Dennis's *The Sea Change* is in part about the circular logic of a liberal weekly magazine, *The Forward,* and the "democratic" tyranny of its financier, Mrs. Morgan. Its second half contains some rather splendid notes for a Polish travel diary, August 1939, and examines (after Henry James) the impact upon several Americans of the older, more despairing, and more self-conscious civilization. To Jimmy Morgan, freed of his mother's constricting embrace, Europe is much what the first sight of London was for Pip in *Great Expectations*—the dazzling beginning of experience and self-knowledge. His section of the book has least form and most spirit. But the novel's argument is in the story of Max Divver, *The Forward's* political writer, who abandons his mechanical progressive values to become the disciple of a small-scale dictator.

The novel tries to treat Divver's tragedy in philosophical and aesthetic rather than simply ideological terms. It is Divver's credo of determinism, his enthronement of Historical Forces, that corrupts his mind by interposing abstractions on his perception of people and things. The spurious diction of *The Forward's* editorial on his death accentuates the meaning of his corruption. (His change of political sympathy is disregarded because it fits no pattern the editors can understand.) Dennis has probably impaled more alarmingly than any other modern writer the special vocabulary of the "progressive," in its complacent nuance and mesmeric inertia: "Max Divver always stopped, Mr. Hull. He stopped because he was always ready to be halted by injustice. . . . We shall fall short of his brilliance, Mr. Hull, just as we fell short in the past: selfishness cannot be obliterated overnight. History will record the specific extent of our success or failure—and history will have her special niche for Maxwell Prentice Divver. It may be no large niche, but it will be sizable enough to contain social aspirations which far transcend the mere act of individual living."

The best thing about Nigel Dennis is that *his* political sophistication never inhibits a regard for the individual. Politics interests him insofar as it operates on the characters' imagination and their sensibilities. What contempt there is in the novel is directed at prescribed behavior, not at persons. Mr. Dennis views with a worldly, compassionate mockery the humorless automatism that seems to be inseparable from current liberalism.

It is true that Mr. Dennis has been fortunate in his relation to the circle he describes, which is somewhat like that of an occasional magazine contributor considering, over a pipe at home, the output of the droning steadies. Mary McCarthy does not have this luxury. She is criticizing the anti-Communist Left from within, and since she, to some extent, implies her own participation in its failures, she cannot easily be compassionate. *The Oasis* has both the vigor and the pettiness of the internal party split. Ideology is always the springboard for action, as for characterization, so that the novel becomes a series of frozen gestures, with political "humours" in ascendance.

The plot itself develops as a kind of ideological tournament. These radical intellectuals

*There **are** some form letters that one **does** finish reading; if they do not impose, are not presumptuous, and have some relation to the needs and taste of the reader.*

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who establish a Utopian refuge from the threatening atomic war are cleanly divided between realists and purists. And it is over a minor question of property rights, which festers into an atmosphere of philosophical guilt, that the community is disrupted. "Ultimately, Utopia would fail; that was to be expected. But it might survive for many months or for years, if the production of a commodity more tangible than morality could be undertaken."

The moral background, with its dogmatism and its propietary attitude toward ideas and ideals, is shrewdly perceived, but where are the flesh-and-blood "figures"? The radical intellectual has, in the course of one decade, been transformed from stock-hero to stock-villain. The performers never appear as their relaxed unprofessional selves, as eaters, readers, and laughers. And it is all the odder that they do not, since Mary McCarthy greatly likes what is free and unpredictable. The most amiable characters in the colony of Utopians are Leo Raphael, a mercurial, inconstant poet; MacDougal Macdermott, who can suddenly shift opinions with the ease of an amateur parliamentarian; and Katy, who is close to her creator, indecisive, and handled with unique maternal tenderness.

It must be admitted that the predictable behavior of the colonists is one of the points of Miss McCarthy's satire. In the same paradoxical way, her depersonalizing manner protects an oversusceptibility to the personal. But even for a critique, *The Oasis* is needlessly mordant, always torn between its cool, orderly prose and its disorderly rancor. As a novel it is in many respects out of proportion. It substitutes epigrams for imagination, converts (in deference to its old-time religion) mild farces into capital issues, and mild weaknesses into grotesqueries.

The Misuses of Adversity

LETTERS TO MY SON. By DAGOBERT D. RUNES. Philosophical Library. 92 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by MONROE ENGEL

AFTER reading Dagobert Runes's slim volume of letters to his son, one is prepared to believe that Dr. Runes has been the victim of a contemporary world that has been kind to no one, and that has had a particularly small share of kindness for Jews and scholars, both of which Dr. Runes most militantly is. But however much one may appreciate Dr. Runes's experience, it is difficult not to be disturbed by the implications he draws from it.

For Dr. Runes's message to his son is essentially one of crude despair. "We live in an ocean of things," he says, "but few are of beauty and few are of merit." In this wilderness of worthlessness, "there is one thing, one single thing that will endure—that is the Book." In a worthless world, the only real merit man can have is attachment to something beyond the world, to God, and "man's closeness to God may be measured by his proximity to the Book."

The vanity of the world is a philosophical coin that has had much currency, and the turning from the world to God has been one of its more frequent and richer concomitants. But the paths to God have been more varied and more generous than Dr. Runes allows, whose passage is only by the Book, and into whose society of those close to God any but the Jew will find difficult admission.

The line of demarcation between Christian and Jew has been drawn no more exclusively by any race theorist than it is drawn in these pages:

"The Jew has given our Western world the one true God, the great Book of Wisdom and Poetry, whence our literature and art sprang; even the instruments of our music: Harp, flute, drum, trumpet, cymbal, came to us through the Jew.

"What have the people of the Western world given the Jew? They burned the Jewish temple, made torches of Jewish bodies, and bonfires of Jewish books."

PERHAPS it is only natural that a man who finds so little to attract him in the world should deal only crudely with the affairs of the world, and yet the specific semblance of his crudity does not seem to stem from the Kingdom of Heaven. It is difficult in this book accurately to assess Dr. Runes's beliefs. He records his disillusion with the Soviet Union, but with a kind of sentimental regret for a good thing gone wrong. He declares himself a materialist, and states his suspicions of "the enemies of materialism." And in another letter: "The thinking of people usually depends upon which side their bread is buttered"—a curious statement from many points of view. It is strange that a man who protests so strongly the pre-eminence of God and the Book, should pin his hopes finally only in bread, and bread of a very mealy flour at that.

Everything Dr. Runes touches grows somewhat debased by his touch. He commends his son to friendship, for a friend "will always see you as you imagine yourself in your dreams." Art is judged, or at least discarded, by its overt social message: "We have Huey Longs and Staviskys in all the fine arts. There always will be Ezra Pounds in literature"; or by the personal social attitudes of its creators: "The world can do without the works of Richard Wagner, Richard Strauss, and the like." And finally any devotion to art is suspect in a world still faced with material wants: "We have fancy-pants today who flutter through museums and lecture-halls with idealistic prattle, while half of God's living children may live or die for want of the simple material things that hold together body and soul."

One could go on filching quotations to curdle the blood, but it is too easy and finally purposeless. This might be a really alarming book were it more persuasive, more likely to attract readers. But the meanness of its ideas is given a proper cloak of faulty logic, old saws, and such doubtful contributions to contemporary vocabulary as: "those who raised you on the palms of their hearts"; "what man manufactures and what man mentor-factures"; "pregnant with statesmanship."

It is not difficult to understand the state of mind of the victim, and yet there have also been victims who did not allow themselves to be completely victimized, who did not in effect adopt the instrument of their victimization and pass this instrument on as precept to those who followed them. Nicola Sacco wrote to his son Dante from the Charlestown State Prison on August 18, 1927: "You can see the real brotherly love, not only in joy but also and more in the struggle of suffering."

Gambit Declined

KNIGHT'S GAMBIT. By WILLIAM FAULKNER. Random House. 246 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by MARTIN GREENBERG

THE five stories and one novelette making up this volume, despite the technical brilliance of their telling, are all extremely slight. The one exception, though only in comparison with the rest of the volume, is "Tomorrow," which, like the great and fantastic *As I Lay Dying*, has to do with the dogged and obscure part of the population of Yoknapatawpha County living up in its stony hills. The "point" of this little tale, moreover, is the same one Faulkner makes in his great hillbilly anabasis: " 'The lowly and invincible of the earth—to endure and endure and then endure, tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow.' " In *As I Lay Dying*, however, nobody *says* this—it doesn't have to be said. In *Knight's Gambit*, this sentiment, as well as many others, is put into the mouth of Gavin Stevens, county attorney and Southern ideologue, who is the moral center and dramatic pivot of all these stories.

Faulkner's narrative method owes a great deal to Conrad, I believe, and Gavin Stevens, though not a narrative "I," is a sort of Conradian narrator. In this, however, Faulkner has fallen behind rather than gone beyond Conrad's example. For the character of Stevens, used most ambitiously in his recent *Intruder in the Dust*, has allowed Faulkner to indulge in a long bout of opinion-mongering. In his best works he gives us a vision which is something other and more real than opinion. But with the advent of Stevens he has taken to airing his views directly, about the South in particular and about modern civilization in general. His work has suffered for this. *Intruder in the Dust* fails because on the one hand there is the story, and on the other Faulkner's "solution" to the Negro problem, as expressed by the obnoxiously avuncular Stevens, there being no necessary connection between the two. The author plainly believes that Stevens' opinions follow from and illuminate the story. But the story can serve as justification for any sort of opinion—for the self-righteous Northern cant Faulkner abominates, as well as for his own reactionary ideology.

STEVENS, the Philo Vance of these "detective" stories, is a curious and rather preposterous creation. With all the awe of the autodidact, Faulkner never fails to remind us of Stevens' Harvard Phi Beta Kappa key and of his PhD from Heidelberg. And then there is "that ritual of the Translation . . .—the rendering of the Old Testament back into the classic Greek into which it had been translated from its lost Hebrew infancy—which Uncle Gavin had been engaged on for twenty years now. . . ." This quixotic unworldliness on the part of the unambitious and unselfseeking Stevens, Faulkner chooses to celebrate in decidedly worldly stories (potboilers, that is to say) two of which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* and the rest of which very plainly had that Parnassian summit as their spiritual goal. Stevens, moreover, an aristocratic Southern republican and the very antithesis of the debased modern demagogues that figure in Faulkner's pages, is described, with egregious demagogy, as "a loose-jointed man with a mop of untidy iron-gray hair, who could discuss Einstein with college professors and who spent whole afternoons among the squatting men against the walls of country stores, talking to them in their idiom. He called these his vacations."

Knight's Gambit, the novelette that gives this volume its name, is a melodramatic and sentimental piece of trumpery incongruously tricked out in Faulkner's elaborate late style. In a strange way it travesties, or revises (as if Faulkner, softened by years, were repenting his earlier unrelieved tragic harshness) elements of the story of Candace Compson ("Caddy") in *The Sound and the Fury.* Like Caddy, the heroine of this story is a victim of the rotting of the Southern landed aristocratic tradition, though unlike Caddy there is nothing at all doomed and demoniacal about her. Her father "farmed his heritage and, with a constant tumbler of thin whiskey-and-water at his elbow and an aged setter bitch dozing at his feet, sat through the long summer afternoons in a homemade chair on the front gallery, reading in Latin the Roman poets. . . ." But then she is made to marry a rich man "whom nobody in that part of Mississippi had ever heard of before," and the "once-simple country house is transmogrified into something a little smaller than a Before-the-War Hollywood set." With the death of her husband, Mrs. Harriss, the heroine, like Caddy, wanders about in Europe an exile from Jefferson and Yoknapatawpha County. Unlike Caddy she comes back and, after melodramatic complications, marries her old beau Gavin Stevens, the story ending on a very genial and patriotic note indeed for William Faulkner.

These stories, then, are no great addition to that most ambitious imaginative effort in modern American literature, the saga of Yoknapatawpha County. It is to be hoped that with the marriage of Stevens we have seen the last of him. The Faulkner that we value as the most powerful living American writer is not the *Southern Review* ideologue, but the poet of such a work, for instance, as *The Bear,* that infinitely sad and moving elegy on the death of a pastoral America.

Book Reviewers in this Issue

Franz Borkenau is the author of several distinguished works on the history of Communism. His review was translated from the German by Martin Greenberg.

Ralph Weiman wrote the article "The Re-Creation of Hebrew" in the June 1949 Commentary.

Isa Kapp contributes frequently to this magazine.

Monroe Engel is a publisher's consultant in New York. He has contributed reviews to the *Nation.*

Martin Greenberg is a frequent contributor to Commentary.

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